Cleaned version - 28/04/2015

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01. Incident in a Certain Cave

This is my first submission.
As this is my first story, please take care of me.

Chapter 1.

Human beings—they're nothing but trash.

I cowered in the depths of a deep cave, and even as I was being tormented by incessant pains, I continued to spit out curses.

That was the only thing I could do.

Exhausted and unable to properly rest, my body can't move very well.
I'm so hungry that stomach acid is burning my insides, and even my eyes spin with dizziness.
My breathing feels feverish and unstable.

If I actually fell sick at this point, it'd really be the end for me.

I didn't want to admit that I've been driven into a corner.

Damn it. Damn it.
Dying a lonely death, by myself, in such an unknown place as this...

I wonder what sins I have committed to have to meet a fate like this.

No, that's not right.
I haven't done anything.

They are the ones who did it. At most, I was only a victim.

That’s why I continue to curse.

By doing so, I try to keep my consciousness from slipping.
Because when this hatred fades away completely... I think that my existence will probably disappear at the same time as well.

But, as if to mock the efforts of someone like me, I hear some kind of sound coming from the direction of the entrance of the cave.

The sound of something being dragged along the ground.
It’s an ominous scraping sound, as though it was chipping away at my soul.

...Don't come. Don't come, don't come, don't come!

I cry out inside my heart, but the sound continues to approach steadily.

It's over. I can't escape from it.

With my heart filled with hopelessness, I turned my gaze towards the sound while still crouched.

Standing there, with a semi-liquid body structure, was a creature over two meters tall.

"...Ah."

Monsters.
That’s what we called them, the natural enemies of human beings.

The creature we conveniently named ‘Slime’, despite not having any eyes, seemed to have found me. It approached with an agility one wouldn’t expect from its appearance.

I didn’t even think about escaping. In the first place, I don’t even have enough physical strength left to stand up.

“Damn it!”

My outstretched arm was the first to be eaten by strong digestive fluids. Instead of pain, a form of numbness and loss of feeling was transmitted to my exhausted brain, as the uniform I'm wearing melts.

It seems my life will be coming to an end here.

No, no, no.
I don't want that.

"...Someone, save me."

Leaving behind such pathetic words, I lost consciousness in the end.

That was a morning 3 days ago, when I began to despair in the beings called 'humans'.

<AUTHOR'S NOTES>

◆ This is the prologue.
The story will begin from the next chapter.

PREVIOUS - TABLE OF CONTENTS - NEXT

HOME

Cleaned version - 21/06/2015

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02. Students Transferred to Another World

Synopsis of the previous chapter:
Meeting with the heroine...

Chapter 2.

About a month ago, I—Majima Takahiro—was transported to another world along with the students and staff of the high school that I attend, XX No.1 Prefectural High School.

Right after suddenly being hit by a sense of intoxication while in class, we found ourselves surrounded by an unknown scenery.

A dense forest. Damp air.
It was clearly a place other than modern Japan.

Honestly, I was stunned. Unable to comprehend the situation, I could only wander about in confusion.

Before long, the teachers and several students started to assemble the confused students.

One of the teachers said he would go scouting, and disappeared into the forest.

It was a heroic action.
He must’ve been a good teacher with a sense of responsibility. But unfortunately, because he was in charge of classes of a different year, I didn’t know his name.

Right after the screams of his last moments were heard, it happened.

What made us cower in bloodcurdling fear was the appearance of a lizard-like monstrosity over five meters long that walked upright in front of us——a *dragon.*

In its mouth, the dragon was holding the corpse of the teacher who had went scouting.

The students fell into a panic.

In the midst of the chaos, I was thrust aside by someone and fell to the ground. I think I was really fortunate to have avoided receiving any serious injuries, despite being stepped on a few times and screaming out loud.
Moreover, I was also lucky to be in a spot away from the dragon.

I saw the students who, unlike me, were unlucky enough to be eaten one after the other by the dragon.
If this continues, I will soon be eaten as well. Everything in my eyes became dark from despair.

I think it was the third person.
A male student was cornered by the dragon.

Because I fell down and couldn't run away, I ended up fixedly watching his predicament.

He was unable to stand, and the dragon attempted to eat his upper body.

"Hi-hiyaaaaaaaaaa——!"

He probably wasn't thinking about anything.
The student struggled as hard as he could, widely flailing both of his arms.

With a speed eyes couldn't follow.
With an unimaginable force.

The next moment, the dragon's face was blown off.
The scene was like a joke. In fact, the most surprised person was probably the student who actually killed the dragon.

And thus, we were able to overcome the first threat.
With the power bestowed upon us——cheat abilities.

＊＊＊

I wonder if you've ever read a story about getting transferred to another world?

It’s unfortunate, but I haven’t.
However, according to a discussion I had with a good friend of mine, ‘students from modern Japan getting transferred to fantasy-like worlds’ is a seemingly popular theme among young people.

Although if you’d actually experienced it yourself, it’s nothing but misfortune.

But why did stories of such a genre became popular? When I first heard about it, I really couldn’t understand.

Well, wouldn’t you agree?

We were born and raised in a modern Japan that was both complacent and disposed to peace, and as students without any special powers, in another world where swords and magic exist, our existence is simply one to be devoured.
Even if you went to another world, you probably couldn’t play an active role in it. At best, you would only be able to live while in hiding. However, that wouldn’t make a good plot.

The answer to those questions of mine was something called the ‘cheat ability’.

“Cheat” was originally a word meaning to ‘trick’ or ‘deceive’, but in Japan it’s now used as a gaming term in things like net games, where a modding tool is used to perform normally impossible manipulations.
<TL Note: Modding tool: A tool used to mod or modify content from a ‘video game in order to make it operate in a manner different from its original version’. See wiki for more information -Kiddosr>

It is a template of sorts in stories where people who reincarnate in or transfer to another world possess strong powers that defy common sense.
That is probably why such acquired powers are also called a ‘cheat’.

Be that as it may, I still couldn’t understand the mentality of my best friend who said, “For those of us who came to this world, it’s natural to be endowed with cheat abilities”.

At any rate, we were actually able to obtain mysterious powers.
One person was able to smash open the ground using one’s bare hands, and another was able to wield an indescribable power that could only be called magic. Strangely, they seemed to know instinctively how to use their powers, and controlled them as naturally as breathing.

Then, without further consideration, we called them ‘cheat abilities’.

Thanks to cheat abilities, a world wherein we would normally be nothing but overwhelmed by monsters became remarkably easy to live in.

We built a temporary shelter, repelled monsters and removed threats. As a matter of fact, we added them to our current rations.

However, not everyone was blessed with a cheat ability.

At most, only a third held cheat abilities—about 300 people.

Those who held cheat abilities went into the forest to hunt and protected the temporary shelter. Because they primarily conducted explorations of the forest, we named them the ‘Scouting Corps’.
Those without cheat abilities became engaged with the construction works of the temporary shelter. In contrast with the ‘Scouting Corps’, they were referred to as the ‘Stay Behind Group’. We named the settlement that was thus completed: ‘Colony’.

By the way, I didn’t have a cheat ability, and my otaku friend who taught me about cheat abilities didn’t have one either. There are those with cheat abilities and those without. Perhaps there was some theory behind it, but unfortunately, I didn’t know those reasons.

To be precise, there seems to have been some improvement in physical strength, etc., for the remaining 700 people but those were too trivial; not to an extent where it could be said to be a cheat ability. I also felt some slight discomfort with my body, but that could be said to be at the level of no more than an illusion or feelings of stress originating from the mayhem.

A week later…
Even though there were some additional victims, the students who were transferred to another world tentatively became able to experience a somewhat steady lifestyle.

At that time, something like a system of government, run by one portion of the students, also began to function.
Because there were nearly 1,000 people, the existence of a system to unify them was absolutely necessary.

Having done that, the next thing on our minds was discovering what kind of world this was. At this point, no one believed that this was our original world anymore. If we asked those who had the inherent cheat abilities of controlling magic to teach us, we could even learn how to use magic.

Of course, only those who already had cheat abilities were given the opportunity to learn magic. They had to fight for our livelihood, and—as one might have expected—had no spare time to teach magic to those of us of the Stay Behind Group who were living in the temporary dwellings assembled from all kinds of trees that were cut down.

At any rate, we were searching for knowledge about this world.

Are there humans like us here?
If there are, how can we escape from this forest to meet them?

Thus, the First Expedition Unit was formed. Their aim was to escape this forest. Thinking back on it now, I can't help but to feel a sense of irony towards that name. Because a *Second* Expedition Unit would never be dispatched for the rest of eternity.

One week after the Expedition Unit left, our temporary shelter—the Colony—was destroyed.

Some of the people with cheat abilities staged a coup d'état.

Thrust from their former world into the middle of a forest of another world where laws do not exist, it was hard for the students to retain their morals. It is even more so for those who gained something like cheat abilities. Power drives people mad. Youth leads people astray. It's that kind of thing.

Aiming for the absence of the First Expedition Unit, a group of ambitious people, the Revolt Group, gathered and staged a coup d'état.
An intense battle ensued between the students who tried to maintain order and the students of the Revolt Group.

A cheat ability is a power that can easily kill even dragons.
Because of the conflict between those who hold such powers, students without cheat abilities, including myself, could only run about, trying to escape.

It still would’ve been fine if they were just running about, trying to escape.

It wasn't only just a portion of the people with cheat abilities who had lost reason.
Even the students without cheat abilities abandoned themselves to violence.

In the midst of this, I was violently assaulted by fellow students of the Stay Behind Group.
If I had to say what went wrong, I think it was just bad luck. There were others like me, who were also victims of the commotion.

No one came to help.

I guess that no one had the leisure to do something like that. Everyone was desperate to survive. That was a logical rationale.

However, my emotions were a different matter. The sight of numerous students witnessing me being assaulted, yet pretending not to and continuing to escape, tore my heart to shreds.

The only reason I survived was because I was lucky.

Just then, a fight between cheat ability users broke out nearby, and everyone was hit by the resulting shockwave.
The students who were violent towards me were all turned into black ashes.
Only I, who had fallen to the ground, survived.

It was all about luck. There was nothing odd about dying or getting killed.

The moment I recognized this, my wounded heart felt as if it had become awfully empty.

Forcing my injured body onwards, I escaped into the depths of the forest, and wandered inside for several days.
Then, this morning, I found a cave and took refuge there.

Even though I had found a place to take refuge in, I, who had barely escaped with my life, couldn’t do anything hereafter.
After all, there are many monsters rampant in this forest, and without any cheat abilities or means of fighting, I became unable to leave the cave.

If I’d really wanted to survive, maybe I should’ve taken a risk and looked for people I could

trust before leaving the Colony.

However, in the midst of that confusion, I wasn't able to do that. No, even if it hadn't been a situation like that, where you didn't know what would happen in the next minute, I think it would have been impossible for me, as I am now, to make such a choice.

I could no longer believe in humans any more.

Human beings are nothing but trash.
That conviction might've been the only thing I gained after coming into this world.

Or perhaps I might've lost something important as a person.

Either way, it was inconsequential for me, as I was already about to die.

<AUTHOR'S NOTES>

◆ Thank you for reading this far.

◆ For the time being, I'll continuously post until the 3rd chapter.

◆ The heroine starts to become a heroine starting from the 6th chapter.
I intend to write carefully, so please wait for a while.

PREVIOUS - TABLE OF CONTENTS - NEXT

HOME

Cleaned version <11/06/2015>
Finalized <11/02/2015>

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03. The First Monster of the Family

Synopsis of the previous chapter:
The incident about being beaten up and becoming distrustful of humans.

Chapter 3.

"...That's right, humans are nothing but trash."

I was awoken by the sound of my own voice.
I was in a dark place. It appeared to be a small cave.

I can't recall anything from before I had fallen asleep. What in the world have I been doing?

With a heavy head, I got up.
And for the first time, I noticed a presence other than my own.

"U-uwa."

Beside me was a monster that we called 'Slime'.

"... Aa!?"

With that, I recalled everything.

Screaming "Hiih!", I covered my head and crouched down.
Although, it goes without saying that such a reflexive response was completely meaningless.

Keeping still, I awaited my destruction——or not? I unintentionally raised my head.

"...?"

No matter how long I waited, there were no signs of the Slime approaching to attack me.
And yet, that shouldn't be the case.

For some reason, the Slime continued to stand still at that place.
There's no way it didn't notice me, right?

"Why..."

While speaking, I lowered my arms from my head and noticed another important thing.

“Eh? I… still have my arm?”

If my memory serves me right, before I fainted, my arm should have been digested by the Slime that is right before my eyes.

I would've been lucky to get away with just a serious injury; in fact, it was the kind of situation where it wouldn't be strange to have lost an entire arm.

However, my hand is still attached. All my fingers freely moved as I willed.

On the contrary, even my lesser injuries are gone.

It's not only my arm.
Not a single one of the injuries that had caused dull pain throughout my body remained.

"Why..."

As if to answer to my query, the Slime moved closer to me.

I just knew—somehow—that it wasn't hostile.
...Really, I wonder why.

In fact, I was even convinced of it.

In the first place, if the Slime right in front of me had wanted to, it could've probably melted my entire body while I was unconscious——is the theory I came up with, but that wasn't the fundamental reason why I had judged the Slime in front of me to be unhostile.
On a more instinctive level, I was convinced 'This isn't an enemy'.

"Hn?"

While I was perplexed by my inexplicable conviction, the Slime extended several tentacles towards me.

The tentacles touched my knee. It felt smoother than I thought it would, although a slight pain shot through my knee. Perhaps I scraped it when I curled into a ball and covered my head in a panic earlier; my knee had a slight graze on it.

A small, white light was emitted at the tips of the tentacles that gently brushed my knee.

"!?"

The light depicted a complex geometrical pattern.
It was called a magic circle; even I, who had lived in this world for the past one month, know that. The reason being those people with cheat abilities had used them.

The light of the magic reveals its attribute. White is 'Light'. It specializes in exorcism and recovery.
<TLN: 'Light' referring the attribute category of the magic. -Blesser>

When the tentacle shined, my injury was healed completely.
Now that it has come to this, even I can read the situation.

"By any chance… Did you help me?"

I ask, but there's no reply. Obviously. The other party *is* a monster after all. But no matter how one thought about it, this one is my ally.

It being my ally was another baseless conviction.
Receiving the various hints given so far, finally, my mind started to comprehend the current situation.

“...Aa, I see.”

Like letting out a sigh, those words escaped unwittingly.

“*This* is my cheat ability?”

Of the one thousand people who were transferred into this other world, three hundred had awakened to their cheat abilities.
The haves and have-nots. I had wondered about what the difference was. Jeez, *now* I understand that those thoughts had been off the mark.

The seven hundred students probably just hadn’t realized what their own powers were.
Just like me.

Sequestering oneself in a safe place makes it impossible to become aware of something like a [Turn Monsters into Family Ability].

“...This is perfect for me.”

In this world into which we were too suddenly thrust into, I, injured and about to die, was forced to realize that power is necessary for the sake of survival.

I am now independent, only my own power was necessary.
After all, this is because humans can’t be trusted. Those guys will betray you. I came to know that. Even the classmates who had sat next to me broke my ribs and laughed scornfully at me.

I will survive on my own.
This was a power meant for that.

I can’t trust human companions, but a Family of Monsters… *Then* strangely, I was able to accept it without any unpleasant feelings. My instincts have told me that even doing so is okay.

It’s a bizarre thing. But for me, that was natural.

“I’ll be counting on you from now on.”

I stroked the Slime’s body. Its smooth surface was comfortable.

“Let’s see… You probably need a name.”

Looking at its jelly-like appearance, I immediately named it.

“Your name is Lily.”

For some reason or another, I gave it a girl’s name.
If you thought about it normally, it would be unbelievable to give a feminine name to such a creature that doesn’t appear to have a clear gender. So perhaps, my cheat ability might have judged that ‘this one is actually a female’.

At any rate.

“From here on, I’ll be counting on you. In order for me to survive, please lend me your strength.”

Despite not being able to trust humans, for me to say such a thing to a monster... It appears as if somewhere, a vital part of me as a human being has been broken.

However, that doesn’t matter. If it means that I can survive, then nothing else matters.

Thus, I obtained power.

<AUTHOR’S NOTES>

◆ Thank you for reading this far.
Being able to receive impressions, etc. is an encouragement for me.

◆ I still don’t quite understand the how to post submissions. Where what is, etc.
I’ll get on by exploring here and there.

◆ The next update is scheduled for tomorrow, 15th December (Sunday).

PREVIOUS - TABLE OF CONTENTS - NEXT

HOME

04. The Outside of the Cave

Synopsis of the previous chapter:

It feels like the Slime looked at me with eyes that seemed to say that it wants to be my comrade, but our Slime doesn't have any eyeballs, it must be my imagination after all.

Chapter 4.

The power I gained---- I guess it is good, but still I cannot help but recognize that the current situation is very severe.

It is the third day, and I haven't eaten satisfactory food.
My injuries were healed, and I'm glad that I am not falling over from physical exhaustion, but at this rate, bit by bit, I will slowly and softly die.

"Hey, Lily. If I can't guarantee water and food, what should I do?"

To my question, a feeling of "Yes" was returned.
…I see, this is convenient. Because of this world with magic, a magical path might have been built. Thus, our Master and servant relationship has been established.

But, I wonder what made it.

Because of the situation, the question was thrown around, I think reverting it might be impossible, but this is a pleasant miscalculation.

"Well then, go prepare as soon as possible."

When I asked, joyfully she gave her "Consent".
And then, the tip of one stretched tentacle shined a blue light.

"Eh?"

Water was poured all over my head and dripped from my bangs inside of the cave.

“...”

Water was poured all over my head dripped from my bangs inside of the cave.

Lily shook her semi-liquid body. Her appearance was full of pride.

“Okay. You’ve done well, Lily.”

Her good intentions were no mistake.
But, a little time is necessary for us to understand each other.

* * *

Aachooo

I was stuffing myself with a skewer of a whole, roasted lizard as I warmed my body by a bonfire.

My wet clothes were drying.
While doing an escort mission, my good partner brought lumber for the firewood, a lizard and some small animals.

My stomach was stuffed. And I had access to water any time I wanted.

Even so, we must next think about our future.

“What should we do first?”

Mumbling, I must first think about ways to ensure my own safety.
In this situation, along with the monsters, the students that came with me to this strange world are potential enemies.

Lily is an outstanding monster. She is good at magic. Her forte seems to be water and wind magic, a slime using magic is extraordinary. I’ve never heard of such story before.

However, Lily was not a strong monster.

Inside this forest, comparing only combat abilities, she seems to be at a low rank.

Although it does not mean that Lily is just a small fry monster.

She was able to grasp the path—I started calling her a girl—though by its nature, Lily is a being called Mimic Slime.

It is unique, this ability to mimic.
Lily is capable of transforming into what she eats.

I accidentally asked what she could do, and I was surprised when she transformed into a lizard.
I can say that, by itself, the usage of such a unique ability as a combat ability wasn't very high.

Lily is perfect.
However, I would say that making use of this ability is pretty hard.

If a monster with high combat capability is eaten, she can mimic it. But for that, you would have to defeat monsters stronger than her.

It's a dilemma.

Although, this was the case before she became my familiar.
After she became my familiar, there were more options.

"All right, Lily. After this I will go gather more familiars. Please lend me your power."

I will increase my family. Then enhance our battle capability.
Let's go in this direction for the time being.

Only one will fight while protecting me, but if there's another monster familiar, either one can guard. The simple increase in the force, more than anything, to join forces in order to defeat monsters, the increase of the actual battle strength of Lily by tying them together will be big.

It was inferior, if considering battle capability, compared to other cheat abilities.

It was because, before running away from the colony, the monsters in this forest were a breeze to the cheat ability users.

My direct combat capability depends in the end on the monster that follows me.
Thinking about it, I was quite insecure with my combat power.

It's quality is compensated by the number in it.
Combat power was urgently needed.

It does not mean that I'm not uneasy. But, I had to do it.

"Don't worry. I'll not be beaten so easily."

Reading the anxiety inside my heart, Lily approached me with her 2 meter large body, and I stroked her smooth surface with my hand.

From the path that was made, some of my emotions passed to her, and then her worried feelings came to me.

By becoming my familiar, Lily seems to be seriously thinking about me.
Even if this consciousness were created because of my cheat ability, I was happy.

Warm feelings filled my chest.
Seems like I'm not alone.

I'm not with my human kouhai.
By the way, those guys were extreme, and I didn't know what they were thinking.
<TL Note : Kouhai pertains to Juniors/Underclassmen>

"It's time to remain in obscurity for a while"

For now it's good to move from place to place, anyway, we need to gather our strength.

"The problem is…… When against a monster, I don't know whether or not my cheat ability is active, I'm not quite sure."

About the cheat ability that I got, I think that not every student who was transferred to this strange world immediately grasped their ability.
Even me.
Because of this, there's no way for Lily and I not to feel uneasy.

I don’t have confidence, so to speak, in whether or not I’ll be able to tame a monster that I encounter; in short, I don’t have the confidence to know how well it will go.

“Although, there’s no future for us if we stay in this bear hole.”

To some extent, it is necessary to move.

* * *

Upon taking Lily out of the cave, the disagreeable smell of the forest entered my nose.

It was a scent that I didn’t experience for one month, and for the last few days I had forgotten this scent. It was because my nose had become useless due to the nosebleed that closed it.

We started to look around our surroundings.

I was inside a small cave in a small hill that was open in the mountain side. The trees around here were dense, and it had a poor view. In other words, it was a hard place to find.

We searched the surrounding woods carefully.

“...There it is.”

One hour had passed since we began the search. We found a monster.

It was a life-sized wooden doll that has been wandering around in the woods.

It was a monster we called a Magical Puppet. You can say it was a common monster in this forest.

The Magical Puppet had the ability to create weapons. Each of them was equipped with wooden weapons and armour. Although they were all made of wood, they were surprisingly sturdier than iron, because they had been enhanced by magic.

This type of weapon was, in fact, also the main weapon of cheat ability users that were transferred to this parallel world.

The main problem of the cheat ability users was obtaining weapons. I don't want to fight monsters with bare hands forever, but there's no route to get weapons.

When you defeat the enemy monster in video games, you might have even been able to get a weapon in the rare drop, but this is the real world. Such things don't happen at your convenience.

But, if skilfully defeated, we could get the weapons the Magical Puppets are using. As a result, the hunting forces were exhausted from gathering the weapons from the Magical Puppets around the colony.

It's survival.

"It's a good sign."

I clapped the body of Lily who is next to me.

"We can get weapons."

The Magical Puppet was equipped with a buckler and a spear. Now, Lily and I were unarmed. I don't know if Lily is able to use weapons, but it doesn't hurt to have some.

After that, the question is whether or not it can become a familiar.

First of all, just to be sure, I have to carefully plan what do in this battle in my mind.

First, we will walk around in the direction of the Magical Puppet.

He came across the place from before; I would say it was luck. Even if he doesn't become my familiar, we can defend against its surprise attacks.

If you consider a fight, you should act based on a careful plan, but I don't have such skill, luckily or unluckily, there was little room at hand for creating a plan

I can do this, I made a firm resolution.

I was strongly clenching my molars, feeling of fear was pressing me down.

…So. Let’s start the strategy.

“Hey, you there! Look this way!”

I appeared from where I was hidden and attracted its attention with a loud voice.
The Magic Puppet turned to me.

“—sk.”

At that moment, I realize.
It’s useless.

My senses said that ‘It will not obey me’.

The moment I glanced at its figure I got a bad feeling. Ah, damn it. Over there was scenes my senses should believe.

With this, I can’t avoid a fight.

The Magical Puppet started to fiercely run.

“…*clench*”

This is intense.

I realized I’m absolutely no match to my opponent in a fight, and became afraid.
I grind my molars in fear. The power to do so, maybe, is what people call trust.

“Lily!”

From the side of the leaping Magical Puppet came a flying water bullet, which hit it.

A block of wood broke. One arm was flying in the air.
The water bullets that came from the brush kept flying from the huge, hidden body of Lily.

Lily can’t move fast because she belongs to the slime family of monsters, but stopping enemy with a surprise attack was not difficult.

The semi-liquid body leaned toward the wooden body of the Magical Puppet.
Creak Creak The wounds on the Magical Puppet squeaked.

“Yes, take that!”

Or so, I praised in joy, but it was not that simple.

The Magical Puppet, using the spear that wasn’t dislodged from the magical attack, stabbed Lily in the body.

“Ahh!?”

Stabbing through, the tip was stuck in her transparent flesh. Liquid was leaving her, Lily’s pain was transmitted through our connection, marking my consciousness with an unpleasant feeling.

“Lily!”

Two, three times. The spear was digging further into Lily’s body. While being held down, she was unable to use magic, so Lily was attacked many times. Each time, bloodlike bodily fluid spew from her body.

Of course, Lily was not strong.
Her tentacles were trying to interfere with the Magical Puppet’s arm, but the edge of the spear was pierced into her body. Little by little, the body of the Magical Puppet was attacked by the digestive juices. But, the situation is unpredictable.

I should not be watching this.

“Damn you! Quickly drop dead!”

To the two monsters’ entangled bodies, I raised my voice while running.

To me, Lily is my only battle strength. To lose it, I can’t go beyond here.--From a rational view, to losing her as my partner, it filled me with genuine fear.

I don’t want to be alone anymore.
I can’t bear loneliness.

Lily brought down the curtain of despair that was given from the loss of my failed life, she is my last hope..

I can’t risk losing this.

“Aaahhhhh!”

I grabbed onto the spear that was hurting Lily.

Lily’s power and my poor physical ability.
With these two together, finally, we stopped the movements of the spear.

If the pre-emptive attack didn’t finish his arm, now might be possible. There was still luck.
Whether or not we could use this luck was up to us.

“You, you… die, die, dieee!”

I loudly kicked the head of the Magical Puppet.

Damn it. It’s useless. There’s no way I can damage it in this situation.

Lily’s digestive fluids were, little by little, wounding the Magical Puppet. If we could keep this balance, it would be our victory.

But, can we really keep this balance…?
A wimpy thought came to mind, I desperately crush it.

It’s all right.
We definitely can do it. I decided to continue!

There was a miscalculation as Lily’s physical strength is weaker than I thought, but still, we have somewhat of an advantage.

I want to believe.
This is a critical moment.

“...Ah.”

While thinking that I froze on the spot.

Beyond the line of trees, there was a figure of a new Magical Puppet.

Holding an axe and a buckler, and equipped with warrior-like equipment, a new Magic Puppet, with a blank, wooden face without eyes or a nose, turned toward us.

“You’re kidding…”

In an instant, my throat dried up.
What a bad timing.

Even though I consider myself usually unlucky, this was cruel.

We can’t afford to give the newcomer a response.
Lily can’t afford to release the current Magical Puppet opponent.
I have simple human strength and the difference in power is too great, so I can only buy some time and can’t afford to release the spear in our enemy’s hand. In this case, should we escape? No, It’s impossible. Lily is too slow and I don’t have the strength to run.

What to do?
What should I do?

As if to answer, the new Magical Puppet started running.
Shit. It’s even faster than us and the guy we’re holding.

In an instant, it covered a distance of 10 meters or more.

“Lily! Attack!”

Following my instructions, Lily sent some of her tentacles in its direction.

If we should talk about the result, it was a bad move.

“Oops.”

Using power to shake itself loose, the Magical Puppet pulled out the spear that had been pressed into Lily's body thus far.

"A, aahhh!?"

I held onto the spear, which dragged me to the ground with its momentum.

I closed my eye involuntarily, the tip of the wooden spear was coming down to where I was.
The Magical Puppet was on top of me, looking down with a blank face.

Lily's tentacles started to entangle—there's not enough time!

Baam, there was a sound, a head was smashed.
Scattering all over the ground were the small, broken fragments.

One life disappeared, and the noise of the battle calmed down.

"...What, happened?"

I am, dripping with cold sweat with the tip pierced into the ground a few inches from my face, trying to understand the scene before me.

Blown into pieces in one hit—The scene where the Magical Puppet was bent over while holding the spear with its head crushed.

Something came flying, I understood that.
But, I only know that far.

I could hear the sound of something splitting.
When I looked, there was a huge battle axe stuck in a tree.

The tree was cut in the middle and made a stomach churning sound while falling.

"....."

I stood with my upper body. Immediately, light wrapped around me and healed the small wound I had suffered in the fall. It was Lily's healing magic. If you consider the damage, I think you should heal yourself and then me, but I will say that to you later.

And near me—there was a figure of a Magical Puppet holding an axe and a buckler near me, respectfully kneeling on one knee.
Well, it wasn't holding the axe now.

"...Don't scare me like that."

When I complained, a puzzled sign came from the Magical Puppet.
That was, the same kind of connection I felt between me and Lily.

It seems that I can know what monsters can become my familiar by simply glancing at it.
…At least if I'm calm. You can say that I gathered some good information.

With a clash, I fell over dramatically.
It seems like I was able to pass the first fight.

And with it, I seem to have also gotten a reassuring fellow.

◆ Thank you for reading this far.

◆ For now, I will post up to chapter 6 today.
◆ This is because the heroine's xxx scene is around there. I should recover the tagging as soon as possible.

PREVIOUS - **TABLE OF CONTENTS** - **NEXT**

HOME

05. The Cabin of Tragedy

◆ Synopsis of the previous chapter:
Did you think that I was gonna die? Too bad, it was my double instead!

◆ Warning:
The story this time will have depictions of gore.
For those who are weak against it, please scroll to the afterword after reading until the second separator.

◆ Because of things that were pointed out (16/12) PS:
Even though it's not direct narrated, there are sexual violence depicted in the story.
For those who are against these kind of things, please follow the abovementioned instructions and scroll to the afterword for confirmation before deciding if you would like to read it.
To be honest, it's not a big deal, but just to be sure. By the way, there are no plans for further depiction in the story. For those who are vehemently against such topics, kindly skip the matter on this chapter.

◆ Specifically, if you can read [Boundary of Emptiness]'s [Ever cry, Never life]) with ease, then it shouldn't be an issue… I think. But I forgot if there was such a scene in direct narration.
<TL note: 『空の境界』の『痛覚残留』 AKA Kara no Kyōkai's (Tsūkaku Zanryū) - I don't know why the English name of the volume reads so weirdly either. - Blesser>

Chapter 5.

Now. I cannot be laying down forever.

The sounds of our battle should have travelled far, alerting monsters and students to our presence. I consider both of them my enemies. I must take this chance to leave here immediately.

Dragging my tired body, I returned to the cave.

Loot was a magicked wooden spear. Additional information about [Monster Tamer]. And, the existence of a new comrade.

"From now on, your name is Rose. My best regards from now on."

The humble Magical Puppet, Rose. Because Lily is lily, I decided to give our second companion the name of a flower. The monster is sexually neutral, or rather, asexual. Giving it a woman's name might not be good. Well, the person itself doesn't seem to mind, I will be only one to call it that anyways. There isn't really a problem.

Note: リリ is Lily phonetically, while 百合 is Lily, as in the flower. - sumguy/fb

I wasn't feeling particularly well as expected from having going through two life-endangering events in a single day, I decided to spend the rest of the time in the cave. Since the total manpower have increased by two person, it's possible to have one of them as a bodyguard.

For procuring food, I let Rose handle it.

I laid my tired body upon Lily whom I used as a sofa and, while I was dozing off, Rose returned. Rose is more agile than Lily but cannot use Magic.

A rat, a lizard, and a squirrel.

Due to the nature of a battle-axe type weapon, the small animals that Rose gathered, all of them had been squashed and cut in half, though anything that will fill my stomach is good by me. All of them, I roasted over the campfire.

To be frank, the taste isn't good.

However, I can't complain as it fills my belly.

Apparently there weren't any large animals nearby. Because there are monsters, they may have all been eaten.

Incidentally, while I was at the Colony, I heard that the difference between an animal and a monster, is the existence of magic. I can't sense the presence or absence of magical power, but it seems I am able to use it.

The difference with magic is absolute. A normal bear that exceeds three meters length, cannot win against a 5 cm long monster rat, it's like that.

Consequently, I believe large animals that only have size have increased difficulty surviving in this environment.

Also, this thing that's known as Magical Power, dwells within one's soul.

When fighting monsters, it's possible to rob them of their magical power. Monsters with large amount of magical power are strong, but the magical power to be gained also increases.

In fact, cheat ability users have been getting rapidly stronger by hunting monsters. Eventually, others who had helped hunt the monsters, also got stronger, to the point where they started to talk about fending for themselves. But before that could be realized, the colony was gone.

What I want to say is, inside the forest are monsters, besides increasing my family there is also the ability to enhance our battle strength. Of course, being able to do it safely is another matter. Today was like walking a tightrope, I'll pass on more.

"Alright. Now then, I am going to sleep."

After filling my stomach, I feel sleepy. My strained mental state is begging for rest. It's a little early, but I'll try to sleep. With the presence of my companion, I can sleep in peace.

＊＊＊

A few days passed.
I continued to stay in the cave.

Life is stable. I try not to remember the crisis, and focused on securing a food source. I even started stockpiling jerky now, it's a world of difference compared to the situation of a few days ago.

Lily wasn't inside the cave. I had asked her to investigate the surrounding area.

Rose stayed behind, because I had other things for her to do..

"Yes. This came out well."

Rose respectfully presented the wooden shield to me, which I receive, then inspect carefully.

It was heavy. The wooden shield I have in my hands, it's larger than even the one Rose has equipped, it's big enough to cover half of my body. Because it's made of wood, I can carry it reasonably well with just my strength, yet it also has the strength of iron, this sort of magic should be considered foul play.

It's a little difficult to manage due to its size, but I would be doomed anyways with my sense for combat when we enter battle. That I can just use it as a wall to protect myself, it's enough.

This was newly created by Rose, it was a protective gear to keep me safe.

Magical Puppets have the [Tool Creation Ability].

Of course, Rose who had joined my Family also had this power. All the tools she makes will have magic imbued in them.

She had excitedly cut down trees with her battle axe, then used a knife to skillfully process the wood.

Protection for my chest and lower body have already been created. Although I think it's too similar to my school uniform, this isn't the time for fashion.

There was the spear that I looted from the Magical Puppet that I defeated for weapon. But, I will not wield it. It's better to stay out of combat.

"Thank you. Please, continue making armour for me."

Responding to my words of thanks, Rose returned happy thoughts, bowing her head.
Note: Like Lily, they can't communicate, but have a telepathic link through their magical pathways. - sumguy / fb

By the way, Rose has nothing but her sword and a shield equipped. The gear made from now on will be given to Rose to use.

As I was doing this, Lily returned, but her appearance was different.

"Welcome back, Lily."

Lily, who had entered my view, looked the same as Rose. She had become a Magical Puppet.

This is Lily's mimic slime ability.

In fact, I had Lily ate the corpse of the defeated Magical Puppet. By doing so, it became possible for Lily to take the form of a Magical Puppet through the mimicry ability. She can still use magic in this form, so our combat strength has increased.

Unfortunately, her weapons and armour creation ability is inferior to that of the original, so I asked her to explore the area. Well, I wouldn't dare to take away the job that Rose has been doing.

"Hm."

Through the magical path, there's a feeling as though Lily want to tell me something.

"What happened, Lily? Did you discover something?"

An affirmation came immediately.

By the way, I can exchange thoughts through a magical pathway, feelings can be transmitted, the intent can be vaguely understood, though it does not have the amount of information conveyed through a conversation.

Therefore, this can't be called a good means of communication. In this regard, measures have to be taken.

"Got it, let's go. Rose, get ready."

We left the cave fully equipped.

I wonder what this is about.

* * *

After leaving the cave for the first time in a while, we walked for around 1 hour, being guided to someplace by Lily.

There, from the same school as me, I saw the figure of a student from another world.

I told Lily previously, if you see any students, reporting it would be top priority.

Lily properly did her duty.

As a result, since the collapse of colony from a few days ago, I was able to find a student aside from myself for the first time.

But, it was a corpse.

A girl that I was once acquainted with, had died all alone in the forest.

The fact that an acquaintance was dead, it made it hard to swallow, I bit down hard on my lower lip.

She had a young appearance, but you can ask anyone and they would agree Mizushima Miho is beautiful. Her blonde-dyed hair went through a brass hair band, and reached her shoulders.

Her corpse hasn't been eaten by monsters yet. From speculation, it hasn't been much time since she died. Additionally, the cause of death wasn't a monster killing her.

The uniform she was wearing was tattered and ripped.

If you look closely, examining the body, there was evidence that she was sexually assaulted.

In despair, she might have rammed a hidden knife into her throat. It was there held tightly in her stiff hand, even now she grasped the knife.

It's possible, that she chose death in order to protect her dignity, and then someone ended up committing necrophilia. In either case, it's horrendous.

Mizushima Miho's beautiful face, was frozen in clear despair.

This may have happened because she, who is a second year like me, was ranked 5th in the school's top beauties.

—Thanks, guys are after all reliable for physical work. In regards to Majima-kun, because you were earnest, I survived.
(t/n He's recalling a conversation with Miho that he had.-berserkknight)
—Not to gloss over it or anything, but it's just a trivial matter.

—Hmm? That might be. To me though, I don't think that way.

Mizushima Miho belonged to the Stay Behind group in the colony, since she didn't have a cheat ability. I only talked to her once, and that was while working on the colony's construction.

She had remembered me, the name of an inconspicuous male student, I remember that I was surprised. I remember her bright smile.

Until a few days ago, she was surely laughing.

"Lily."

I order her in an emotionless voice.

"Eat her."

Lily immediately reacted to my order.

She changed from the Magical Puppet form back to large body of a slime, then covered the girl's defiled body with her semi-liquid body.

Inside the transparent body, Mizushima Miho's existence miserably melts away, I watched this intently.

“…”

The white of the eyes, the red of the internal organs, the yellow of the fat, the white of the bones, and all the other grotesque miscellaneous things, they are things I must remember.

It took time, but Mizushima Miho’s body was completely digested.
By the time I noticed, the sun had set

The setting sun can’t be seen from inside the forest. However, the sky was dyed red, with a blackness mixed with the red creating a creepy shade, everywhere I could see was shrouded like this.

With that background, was the pure white of a young girl’s naked body.

Ironically, her limbs were beautiful. There wasn’t a speck of defilement from when she was alive.

The word rebirth came to mind.
I erased that thought. This is not the case.

It’s not something like that.

“Acquisition complete, master.”

I heard Lily’s voice for the first time, of course, it’s exactly the same as Mizushima Miho’s.

The way of speaking, in all likelihood, probably got carried over from Mizushima Miho. It’s almost identical to how I remember.

It is different though, in that she refers to me as master.

Because of this, there is a hopeless gap in difference that cannot be filled.

This is a fact of course. She is not Mizushima Miho. She is a monster wearing the skin of another.

And, I’m sure I’m one as well, a monster wearing human skin. Otherwise, how can I do something this cruel without hesitation.

—So I decided to use Miho Mizashima’s corpse.

I let Lily mimic her.
It’s a horrible conduct, I’m aware that it’s unforgivable.

However, since I decided to live in this world, I am prepared to do whatever is appropriate in order to do so.

It’s also my responsibility to look after Lily and Rose that are accompanying me.

This was the best course of action, though as a human it is the worst thing to do.

Although I felt nauseated, I swallowed it down, I did what I had to…..

“Did you understand the specs of the body?”.

“Specs?”.

“Inside the body, it should have a special power”.

Well, even the original person didn’t know what her power was. It’s no wonder that it will take time for the mimicker to know what it is.

At the worst, it’s possible that my guess is wrong.

“It’s fine if you don’t know”

Because just by being able to form a human shape, that in itself is useful.

The problem is combat capability, Lily is able to use her abilities even in the form of another monster. For example, in her Magical Puppet form she is still able to use her magic. To be precise, Lily is mimicking, and is able to separate the “form” and “skills” of the original for her own use.

Of course, she is also limited by her “form.” For example, in her Magical Puppet form, the original predation ability of her slime form cannot be used to it’s full potential.

“I think it will do for what master needs.”

“Then it’s good.”

I turned around. I didn’t particularly want to stay here.

However Lily’s voice rang from my back.

“Master, I must tell you something else.”

“What?”

“There are other humans, similar to master and this girl, nearby. It’s probable, that they killed this girl—rather, they were the ones that caused this girl die.”

I suddenly stop.

I turn back and ask.

“Is this true? How do you know?”

“Well, I, they are in this girl’s memories.”

These words she casually said, blew my mind.

“It... Is this true?”

“Yea. Ahhh no. It might be different in the details. This is, yes, they were recorded? The things that I remember are in a sense, the same.”
<TL note: Recorded in Miho’s memory -berserkknight>
“Ah. So you can talk in the same tone as Mizushima Miho.”

Lily’s ability as a slime to Mimic, it may have tremendous capabilities if used thoughtfully.

Of course, Lily’s ability to create tools did not compare to Rose’s, as there is some deficiency or degradation to some extent, it appears she still absorbed the majority of Mizushima Miho.

Complete mimicry, would be equivalent to near total seizure of the other’s existence.

I feel light-headed, thinking this is impossible.
I, I may have done some something worse that I thought, to Mizushima Miho.

“What will you do, Master?”

Lily who has taken the form of Mizushima Miho asks this, while lavishly exposing her beautiful figure to a backdrop of the red-black sky.

“That’s right.”

The information she told me is important information, now that I think of it, rather than worry, there are other things I need to do.

The despicable absolute worst people who killed Mizushima Miho.
That they did all these things to her, that they are still alive, this seems to me to be unforgivable.

“I have decided.”

I answered in a tone full of anger.

“I won’t ignore this responsibility.”

I will kill the person that killed Mizushima Miho.

Such a thing as revenge, it doesn’t carry this type of meaning.

Originally, we weren’t on familiar terms. My feelings towards this are somewhere like, I feel pity for her, and ill will and resentment towards her assailants.

Thus, yes, this can simply be called me taking responsibility.

The people that defiled the girl Mizushima Miho, I am the same as them.

* * *

We are heading toward a location not far from where Mizushima Miho had died.

“…What?”

Inside this demons infested forest, stood a lone cabin.

This is obviously strange. Why, is there a cabin here? Why haven’t it been destroyed by demons? To begin with, there should have been something that’s interfere during its construction.

With suspicion, I head toward the cabin. Then, Lily and Rose suddenly stopped and stood still.

“What’s wrong?”

“I can’t get any closer.”

According to Lily, there’s apparently a mechanism that’s repelling them from the cabin.

Whether I want to or not, I headed toward the cabin alone. Since monsters can’t get close, there shouldn’t be any problem.

From inside the cabin, I can heard a boy laughing, and the scream of a girl. Both of them sounded young, Similar to me, they might be students from a parallel world.

There seems to be more.

“So it wasn’t just Mizushima Miho.”

For some reason, my heart wasn't moved.

Just, it was the same feeling as if the number of dogs was increasing.

Ah, in other words, I didn't think of them as human.

I may be an unfeeling monster that doesn't care for anyone else, but those people are only sub-human brutes. I'm relieved. I'm relieved from the bottom of my heart..

Like this, I don't need to hesitate to kill them

I investigated the place Lily said beforehand "she feels extremely disgusted by." ...but, even though we have a link between us, and it has its uses, in the end being able to converse is better. The detail of information is in another league.

Looking around, I found a beautiful transparent stone on the ground. Sophisticated characters or something like that were written on it. Judging by that, this might be a magical item. It adds up if you think the original owner of the cabin made it.

This plainly suggests some important facts.
In this world, there are humans other than us aliens.

Come to think of it, the primary Expedition Unit, they may have also found these "traces of humans," and it's possible that they changed to their mission to finding an inhabited settlement in the forest.

The humans of this world, they have knowledge unknown to us, and created a trick to repel monsters. It's magnificent. Unfortunately, I don't have the understanding to know the true value or the workings behind it.

"And done."

Precisely because I don't understand it, I can break it without hesitation.

It might be that it's extremely valuable, but it's merely something that's in the way. More so I'll be accompanied by monsters from on anyways, so I can't use it. I don't understand how it works. I felt no regrets for breaking it.

Now then, the fate of the men in the cabin has been decided.

They already, lost the things they should have clung to to this monster-infested world.

Thus, I don't need to intentionally lift a hand here

There's no need, to leave it to the hands of others to end things here, that would be irresponsible.

"Kill all of them except the one they are attacking."

My order to Lily and Rose came, I felt no anguish about it.

Honestly wanted to blow the cabin up with magic, but there was a person being attacked inside, so that wasn't an option. I hate humans. But, that person hasn't done anything bad yet, rather there's no way I can be like them and kill an innocent girl.

"Ah, Wait."

I stepped in front of them to stop my companions.

"Tear off the arms and legs to stop them from moving, stop after that Lily. I don't care if you do more."

"Un? ...Un. I understand."
TL Note : Un is like a nod/yes - Sarah

Doing such a thing may have no meaning.
I don't even know if Mizushima Miho wished for it.

But, this is the only thing, that for her that died that I can do.

* * *

When we entered the Cabin, the school boys within it had shocked faces. No wonder. She's supposed to be dead.

By the way, in order to not shame Mizushima Miho any further, I lent her my school uniform jacket. One arm has been torn off, but it is sufficient to hide the slender body of a girl.

"Do it."

In response to my order, Rose began to run fiercely.

The boy that was assaulting the girl was kicked as he turned around. Though the kick wasn't particularly aimed at it, the school boy's nuts were crushed.

The other school boys froze. They probably thought, that it was impossible for monsters to be in the cabin.

This was their paradise.

It’s a slaughterhouse now.

“I’m going.”

Lily thrusts, wielding the spear I passed to her..

“HigyAAAA!”

The school boys couldn’t even react, toppling as their hands and feet were cut off. Their blood spurting like geysers, a scene from hell was created.

I proceeded into the cabin where blood was spraying everywhere, and take off my shirt, and place it over the naked body of the girl.

The school girl appears to be younger than me. Her face has beautiful features, though it’s currently soiled. She also seems to be wasting away.

“You are…”

“Relax. I have no intention of hurting you.”

She looked up and looked at my eyes. There’s an odd color, I saw a strangeness in her eyes.

But, before I could understand the meaning, she lost consciousness. She probably hit her limit in various ways.

While I untied her arms which were bound behind her, one schoolboy, two schoolboys were stabbed by Lily.

One of them began begging for his sorry ass. A suitable end to a villain.

“It hurts, it hurts. Wha- what is this… ...what is this, you’re alive! AHHHHH… su!”

The last standing guy was screaming.

It didn’t bother Lily, she raised the spear I lent her. There hasn’t been any resistance so far. It’s natural. These guys are a bunch of minor villains that can only bully the weak.

”Wait Lily. I want to hear what he has to say.”

Lily stopped her hand. When I received the spear back from her, I grasped by the bangs, the head of the male student.

“It hurts. Help me. I’m begging ya man. AHH. It hurts. It huuurrttsss!”

“Answer me if you want help.”

Though the school boy looked pitiful, I didn’t care.

“Are there only three of you? Do you have any other companions?”

“There aren’t. It was, just us three. …AHHH, it hurts. It hurrrtttsss!”

He doesn’t seem to have anymore companions. Well it’s fine. At least it wasn’t the worst case scenario, that they had a comrade with a cheat ability, seems like it was a pointless concern.

“It hurts man. I, I answered, you said you’d help me man.”

“That’s right.”

The schoolboy looked up at me and I looked into his eyes and nodded, then placed the spearhead on his throat and pierced it.

I heard him scream and garble, *guba, toka, ge-gya*

“Well, suffer as much as possible.”

The student’s eyes opened wide, as if he couldn’t believe what just happened. After watching his expression of despair, I slowly pulled out the spearhead.

The light disappeared from the schoolboy’s eyes.

This was the first time I’ve murdered.

Since the transfer to this world, I thought this day might someday come.

It’s finished, it was rather disappointing.

But, even with all this finished things are still in a terrible state.

I sighed.

“Clean up these corpses Lily. It’s fine if you leave them in the forest.”

“Is it alright for me not eat them?”

“...These guys remains are giving me a disgusting feeling. It’s OK not to.”

These guys are cheat ability users. Even if they didn’t know their own power, even until their last moment, it would be strong.

If Lily eats their corpse she can obtain their power.

However, this might be a betrayal to Miho.

She who was taken into Lily would be with those guys. I would feel bad. Lily might be defiled.

If absorbed, parts of them will be incorporated, and there is concern Lily will be affected by this. Considering the use of the skill “record,” their personality and memories, they will be stored in Lily as a separate entity. Still, I am concerned. It necessary to negate these concerns.

“Look after this girl Rose. Clean her body and lay her in the bed.”

“What will Master do?”

“I will… do something about this devastation.”

The inside of the cabin is bloody. Thinking of the assaulted girl whose name I don’t know, for her sake I should clean the place. Just my opinion, but I wouldn’t want to sleep in this place.

This was a blood stained place, a place of tragedy.

“…”

I held my head, I unexpectedly have a dull headache.

I felt that they were watching me, the hollow eyes of the dead schoolboys.

Of course, this is just an illusion.

Because my heart is weak I see it, a phantom.

...No wait. I have weakened.

“Are you alright Master?”

“…I’m fine”

I must be OK. I can not afford to collapse in a place like this.

Then, with Lily and Rose following me, using the body of Mizushima Miho, I assumed the responsibility of slaughtering those schoolboys.

If I couldn’t do it, it would have been better to have ended in that cave.

“I’m alright.”

I immerse myself in the work of cleaning up the bloodstained cabin.

It’s like i’m trying to run away from something, I notice.

◆ Thank you for reading this far.

◆ I don’t know where’s the delicate line of how much gore depiction is acceptable. But when I look at [Re: Zero] and [The Nameless Monster], I think that it’s scary how far you can go with it.
Stop. That’s a thorny path!

◆ For the sake of those who skipped, the (perfectly serious) summary of the chapter:
Arriving at the place after following Lily’s instructions, they found the body of a girl.
It was a girl who committed suicide after being sexually assaulted: Mizushima Miho, and the MC let Lily eat her.
Using her mimicry ability, Lily took the form of Mizushima Miho and informed him that the boys that caused her death were at a certain cabin.
There was something like a barrier against monsters around the cabin, after destroying it, the MC massacred the defenseless boys, discovered a girl who had been similarly ravaged like Mizushima Miho, under his protection.

06. Rendezvous in the Silent Night

Synopsis of the previous chapter:

After several things happened, the Slime is now capable of turning into a girl.

Chapter 6.

The night is silent around the cabin.

There is only one small bed in the cabin.

Right now, there is a female student sleeping on it, whose name I do not know.

There is no sign that she'll wake soon, after fainting from the intense physical and mental trauma.

Thus, I am inside, sleeping on the sofa that Lily's body had altered to.

By the way, Rose is not inside the cabin because I have asked her to stand guard outside.

It's a quiet night.

I blankly stare about the cabin as it seemingly sinks into darkness. I'm dazed by recent events, and am not thinking about anything in particular.

After some time had passed…

"Can't sleep?"

A question came from behind.

Based on the feeling of the backrest changing, Lily is moving her body about.
Her slime body is like a gel-filled pad with a rubbery texture.

She converted a hard substance into something soft.

There was no question about it; it's the limb of a girl.

"...That's impressive."

Lily's slime body is under me, keeping me comfortable from the cold, hard floor, and yet she has embraced my chest and neck with the delicate arms of her girl form.
That is to say, she has morphed only part of her body.

While I think it's very skillful, I also wonder why she would bother doing this.

With an unfavorable expression on my face, I twist my neck a bit, my cheek touches the cheek of Mizushima Miho – the human face that Lily imitates.

Her ability to mimic Miho seemed so genuine, even the feel of her soft blonde hair is the same.

Pleasure and excitement raced wildly inside of me.

As well as some bad thoughts.

Her touch is pleasant.

This is the first time this situation has occurred to me, after the past three days filled with loneliness and despair, which was incomparable to the rest of my life.

Even from the body of a Slime, I feel security and comfort. Then, changing to a body of a girl, it's not something I can endure.

I don't mean that in an indecent way. I think I'd just like to embrace her.

Maybe, I am cornered now. It all started from then, when I killed those people that evening. However, that was merely the last turning point.

The stability of my civilized life was shaken considerably. It's necessary in desperate times to forget some things.

In the time of one month, everything has changed, and now I'm trying to take control of my original brat-like attitude…

In a desire to protect some of my way of life, I allowed my reasoning to be swept away.

"Stop it."

I allowed emotion to take control instead of reason.

Mizushima Miho's corpse is now a part of Lily. Lily is able to mimic Miho's appearance, the appearance of a girl that was raped and killed.

I do not want to defile her body. I will not do so.

"Why?"

The feeling behind my back disappears and my torso drops back.

However, Lily catches me with her resilient and elastic Slime body.

“Master…”

From between my legs I can see the upper body of Miho growing, naked in all her glory. Lily proceeds to move her humanized form and crawls provocatively over my knees, past my hands, and to my chest. In front of my eyes are two large mounds swaying with gravity.

No one can blame me for what I might do since I did not initiate anything…probably. No, that’s wrong, what I’m probably going to do is motivated by instinct. How foolish.

“I want to heal you master. Ne, master”

“I told you, stop it.”

Contrary to the pleasure that my body wants to indulge in, my heart is filled with discomfort and unease. It also seems to be winning out.

“I am not going to defile that ‘body.’”

Originally, I should not even be looking at her nude form. That’s what I think.

“Stop it.”

I said these last words mixed with my voice of command. Now, Lily will supposedly withdraw with my orders.

At least she was supposed to.

The breath of a disguised monster… of a girl is on my ears, and it excites me.

“My poor master. Do you blame yourself?”

My face is covered in a soft touch. Lily has laid her bountiful chest on my head.

“I, I want to help you Master. I understand that my Master has been damaged. For this child… for me, you were hurt.”

“…Lily?”

Something is odd. As I pondered this, Lily continued.

“I want to dedicate myself to this ‘person’ whom you believe is important. It is this ‘body’s’ humble desire. If it will assist your important ‘person’ then it will be my joy to help. Master, the most important thing to ‘me’ right now, is you. I mean, because I am your family.”

Lily blushed fiercely as she blurted her words out in a nearly incoherent manner.

This forces my eyes open.

“…Ahh”

Lily looks at me lovingly as she holds me to her chest.

In front of me is Lily. Not Mizushima Miho. But, her regret, her final desire to be embraced, it was definitely in Lily, this feeling only known to me through our link created by my ability.

Why.

The emotions of the deceased should not be affecting Lily.
Lily merely took up the memories for record. To affect her, Lily would have to sift through them.

That they are bubbling up is…

…Damn, so it’s like that.

Nothing to do about it now.

It’s my fault it happened.

Unintentionally, Mizushima Miho’s final regrets as she died, were passed on to Lily. Lily is trying to fulfill them. She is now my family, an important ‘person’ due to my cheat ability.

It appears it’s something like this. Lily is still Lily; however, this desire is that of Mizushima Miho.

No, it’s something different. After all, the two are now inseparable; they are both part of the existence that is Lily.

“I love you, Master. Please, accept me.”

She proclaims this with a feverish love, like a passionate girl.

“…”

I wonder what I should do.

I’m responsible for the end result of Mizushima Miho. Lily is my family, she is part of my responsibilities as well.

I should embrace her. However, it would be out of a sense of responsibility, rather than anything else.

…It’s different. That isn’t it.

I look back into her eyes.

“Master…”

The girl’s eyelashes tremble in sorrow, anxiously waiting for my reply.

As I look at her, she has taken the form of Miho from the thighs up. Everything below is still in the form of a Slime. Even in this insane situation, her body is beautiful; her feminine limbs excite with ephemeral beauty… she is most definitely female.

I don't care what anyone else thinks. Regardless of anyone else, this is what I feel to be true.

"…"

Maybe this is the wrong decision. Maybe this is even unethical. Maybe, this whole situation is abnormal because monsters exist.

Even with these considerations, something that needs to be done. Thoughts must be met. Emotions must be unfurled.

I will do what my heart wants to do most of all.

"…I will treasure you."

I end my vow on her lips as I kiss her, passionately, and take it to heart.

* * *

After all that, with her face in front of me, I'm extremely happy.

Of course, Lily was waiting for me to wake up with a gentle smile on her face.
Now, as I look upon her, I no longer recognize her as Mizushima Miho, but as Lily.

I felt that Miho's final regrets were fading from Lily, and though it is sad, she is now moving on.

The one in front of me is Lily. That is what I have decided.

"Good morning, Lily."

There's no pretending last night didn't happen, so I embraced and kissed her.

As always, her main body is that of a Slime, which is also my bed, and at the same time, from out of the main body she "grew" a humanoid form. This weird situation is going to be the new norm.

"Good morning, Master."

"Good morning… also a good morning to you too Rose."
<TL Note : She was watching wasnt she? D: - Sarah>

I greeted her awkwardly, Rose had returned to the hut without me noticing, and was bowed towards me with an expressionless face.

I'm currently naked, embracing a naked Lily. Apparently, while we were kissing earlier, we failed to notice Rose's presence. She remains in a bowing posture.

…This is super awkward. I feel like a son that has been witnessed sharing a bed with his mother. My own son has now withered; what a shame.

Too bad I didn't get a chance for morning service.
<TL Note: Rose for …nvm -Sarah>
.
After I wiped my body down with a wet cloth, I dressed and exited the cabin. I left the door open to circulate the air. It'd be embarrassing if people smelled the air that stunk of sex.

After all is said and done, the feeling of Lily snuggling against my chest and arm remains; the soft, smooth feeling of Lily lingers.

Coincidentally, yesterday, she was dressed in a school uniform, and now she has appeared in a jersey. It seems the clothing that the male students that were killed yesterday were wearing has been re-appropriated. While there is some hesitation due to the source of the clothing, after a thorough washing, there shouldn't be any problems related to health.

What remains are the unpleasant feelings. Well, after all, we are in dire need of spare clothes, until we can secure a source.

We returned to the cabin after a bit. The girl on the bed still hasn't awoken.

Well then, I ponder our next actions. I should prepare things for Rose. The furniture in the cabin can be cannibalized for wood in preparation for future equipment.

Our main goal hasn't changed. While remaining hidden, I need to get stronger. I need to increase the number of monsters in my family, and by doing this, my survivability increases. Moreover, since the majority of my strength comes from the power of my family, subduing monsters should be a high priority.

The problem here though, is that I've picked up a girl that needs to be protected.

Thinking about my ability, the taming of monsters, it's necessary that I be present with the monster for my ability to work. Until now, Rose and Lily have been exploring while I have stayed back. If this continues, I can't increase my family.

In order to increase my family, I must venture out.

But, there is also a girl here in this cabin. She will need someone to guard her.

My strength lies in Lily and Rose, without them I am weak. If we were to separate, our strength would be weakened. I could leave Rose here and venture out with Lily, but it will be dangerous.

There is also the choice of leaving her to her own fate, but I can't do this. Her current situation reminds me of my weak past.

I required help once, so to desert her would be too much. If I abandoned her I would be like those guys that abandoned me, and like those despicable boys that attacked her.

I can't do that, for sure. I wouldn't be able to live with myself afterwards.

If it comes down to it, I'll have to split with her in the future, but for now…

"Uun"

The girl is stirring as I thought about our situation.

She is slowly waking, as I watch, she slowly becomes aware.

"You've woken up."

I'm sitting little distance away on a log that has been re-commissioned as a chair.

The young schoolgirl is petite. She's most likely younger than me, probably a freshman. Her pigtails that hung to her shoulders makes her seem even younger. Even compared to other girls her age, she seems youthful and pretty.

However, as her brain started to work, she remembers, and her expression darkens. This was, of course, expected.

"Who… someone saved me, was that you?"

She's calmer than I thought she would be. Considering how scarring the memory should be, I thought she'd awaken screaming and panicking as soon as she saw my face. Her calm question seems somewhat anti-climactic.

After I introduced myself, she introduced herself as "Kato Mana," and as expected, she is one grade lower than I am.

After the introductions, she lowered her head and bowed to me.

"That… thank you, for helping me."

"Don't worry about it."

In fact, in a sense, I didn't even mean to help her.

I originally only wanted to avenge Mizushima Miho by killing the students that raped and killed her, and wasn't aware that Kato Mana was in this place.

Saying that, I didn't really help her, she merely survived through what happened. She was lucky—though I hesitate to say such a thing in consideration to her feelings.

"It's a good thing Kato-san did not die."

"Yes, thank you."

She bows to me.

"If you'd like, there is some water here you can use to cleanse your body. I will be stepping outside for a bit."

"What do you mean, where are you going?"

Kato-san asks me in a worried manner.

"Don't worry, I have the power to tame monsters. If you take a look at Rose and Lily over there you will see what I mean. In fact…"

To that end, I explained my current circumstances. That I was going to help her, but I also need to gather strength, and to that end, I needed to go out and explore the forest. I also told her that I would have Rose escort her, for the meanwhile.

I didn't mention that Lily was a monster though, as she is still in her humanoid form. I wasn't sure how she would handle that information.

While I am protecting Kato-san, I am not inclined to trust in other people.
I don't intend to fully lie to her all the time however, since there is the chance that she actually knew Mizushima Miho when she was alive.

Lily was sticking closely to me, and she also called me "Master." I thought Kato-san might ask about it, but that is not the case however, and she remains silent.

Something else was bothering her though.

"In other words… I'm just extra baggage."

"That's sounds bad, it's not like that. I want to live in peace, but I also do not want harm to come to you Kato-san. I will, therefore, take you to a safe place, at the minimum."

For me, this is the most I can do. Even I don't have much room for error. It's best that these goals to be presented in advance. There's no point in reassuring her past that.

However, Kato-san shook her head.

"I'm happy you feel that way, but… there's something else I'd like to ask of you."

“Ask?”

“I want you to… take me with you into the forest.”

I stared at Kato-san in surprise.

“Is that, impossible?”

“…”

I stared at her blankly. Glancing at her, I tried to gauge her mental state.

What could she be thinking.
What an unusual request, is what I thought of her abrupt question.

That said, not having the energy to try anything would be worse than this, which is just a bad idea.

…Well, I shouldn’t over-think it.

Also, this offer is convenient for me, since I do not want to split my family up and have Rose separate from me to guard her.

“Please consider it.”

Kato-san bows her head to me.

There’s no reason to refuse her, right?

”I understand, there’s nothing to think about.”

“Thank you very much!”

I end up going along with her whims.

Kato-san lowers her head to me once more, and as she slowly raised her head, she seems to smile, just a bit.

Author’s Notes

◆ Thank you for reading this far.
It’s difficult to be considerate about this and that when writing about graphical, grotesque scenes huh.
Or rather, I don’t know how to.

◆I was thinking about gradually shredding light on it from now on and adding the exchange in. Just like this blissful morning after last night's activities.

◆This work has the heroine as a monster mixed in as a lustful component. It'll be great if the illustration that was drawn is up to your expectations but…

◆The next update will be on 18/12 (Wednesday).

PREVIOUS - TABLE OF CONTENTS - NEXT
HOME

07. Encounter With A Wolf

Synopsis of the previous chapter:

She was on top then I was on top.
(This isn't an error)

Chapter 7.

I had Lily make some water with magic for Kato-san to use to clean her body. Before she started cleaning herself, I left the cabin.

To assist her, I left Rose with Kato-san.
I figured Kato-san would be more relaxed while cleaning herself, since Rose's body is dissimilar to a human's.

Kato-san initially rejected my proposal, but finally relented after a few times.

I don't know if pushing it was the right thing to do, since I'm a man.

Half the reason I wanted Rose to assist her was so Rose could also watch over her, though I didn't mention that.

“Master. Are you really taking that girl?”
“That was out of the blue.”

Lily asked me in a small voice after we left the cabin. It made me smile wryly.

“Don’t laugh, geez.”
“My bad.”

Lily sulks, cherry lips pouting.
She looks really childish like that.

“Are you dissatisfied with my decision?”
“I will not oppose the decision of my master.”
“You didn’t answer my question.”

Lily will follow my decision, though it’s hard to say whether she is convinced it is the right decision or not.

She is asking me now when we are alone together most likely because she couldn’t bear it.

Of course if my decision isn’t agreeable then things will become unpleasant.

It may be that she is unhappy because I am placing myself at greater risk.

“I’m not saying you need to protect her separately. Think first of your well-being, then my safety, and third would be Kato-san. Like this, isn’t the prioritization simple? It’d be hard to make a mistake.”

“You made a mistake in the order of the first and second priorities.”
“Anyways, I don’t have the power to change her desire.”

I decided we’ve digressed enough and return to the previous talk.

“It’s unlikely she’s be a direct threat to us, more than likely just a small inconvenience. I think we can accommodate that much.”

“Putting it another way, won’t it be inconvenient since I’ll be seen by Kato-san? Since, you know, I’m currently hiding my identity from her.”

“I don’t mind if she finds out. It isn’t that important. It’s merely a precaution.”
“The talk has gone off on a tangent, Master. I won’t let you deceive me.”

Rather than Lily being dissatisfied, she showed an anxious face.

“Is that child really that important?”
“That’s not it.”

I stroked her head, running my fingers through her silky blonde hair.

“I want to protect her, maybe because I want to keep that “something,” at least that’s what I think.”
“What is it?”

“I saved Kato-san yesterday. After saving her, I can’t just abandon her because it’s inconvenient. It’s something like after picking up a cat and taking it home, then throwing it away. I need to take responsibility for my actions.”

…...I think.

It’s hard to believe, and who knows if it’s right.

My reasoning is, I do not want to further lose my sense of ethics and morals. After all, I have already murdered three people already.

Now, why is it like this.
Even after self-examination, I still don’t know my own heart.

So there was no other way other than to call it a “something.” It’s kind of like that.

“Master is—“

I am reflected in Lily’s eyes as she ponders what to say. She laughs a little as she can’t think of the words.
“Master is serious then.”
“It may be meaningless, what I just said.”
“It’s not”

This conversation brings up a sense of nostalgia.

“In regards to my master, it is not so.”

Lily leans her head against my shoulder.

“Then, yes. If it is for Master, then I will protect that girl as well.”
“I see.”

I pat her head with my other arm.

“Thank you”

How curious.

Even though we’re in a dangerous area, even though things are hectic, the feeling that arises right now is only happiness.

It’s probably: I think I just don’t want to lose that “something,” such a time as it might be lost…

These things, I think vaguely about them.

Suddenly, I realize something.

If I’m right, then what I really want to protect, what is really important, are these moments of irreplaceable happiness.

* * *

After waiting for Kato-san to finish washing her body, we left the cabin.

“Did you forget anything? Make sure you bring everything you can, since we won’t be returning here.”
“...Yes.”

Lily, who is still holding onto my arm, tilts her head up and asks a question.

“Huh? Master, are you giving up the cabin?”

Kato-san glances at lily.

But she doesn’t say anything.
Nor does she ask anything.

Lily looks to be the same as me, a student that was teleported to this world from Japan, and thus her calling me “Master” should raise suspicions.

Yet, Kato-san doesn’t mention it, so I wonder what she’s thinking.

I don’t know what she’s thinking, so I’ll probably have to ask, though it’s probable she’ll ask me questions in return.
Furthermore, there is no guarantee she’ll answer honestly.

How do I say it, this is annoying.

I trust Lily, and I trust Rose, because somehow, we have connected through my ability. Above all else, I have faith in them.
Thinking along this line, Kato-san's existence is stressful.

Thus, inviting a human to travel with us invites problems.

I guess there's no choice but to endure it for now.

"Master."
"Ah, well, it's OK."

Clearing up the useless thoughts, I turn to face Lily.

"Something similar to a barrier was in place to keep monsters away from the cabin. It's gone now, though. There's no need to stay in a place that stands out so much."

I need to be vigilant, for not only were many monsters, but many humans are also my enemies.

Thinking that way, the cabin stood out too much.

Considering also, that escorting Kato-san might require contact with other humans at least once to ensure her safety, this must be kept in mind.

Best case scenario, we can find a group of humans that would be safe and drop Kato-san off there without ever coming in contact with them.

Well, it's not likely to go so well.

"Well, let's head out."
"Un."
"...Yes."

As we left the cabin, Lily is in good spirits, and in contrast, Kato-san seems depressed.

Rose takes the vanguard and Lily takes the rearguard. In this formation, Kato-san and I are escorted through the forest.

"Kato-san, walking in the forest can be tough on the body. Let me know if you are tired."
"I know, I'm OK though… sorry."

“Master, are you tired?”
“Oh, no, I’m alright.”

As expected of Lily, she released my arm now.

After she did, I felt reluctant to let her go, as the warmth faded from my arm.

To feel that it was too bad at the time… …means I am also being selfish.

After walking several hours, while taking some breaks along the way, and not encountering any monsters, we happened upon something abnormal.

“...Smells putrid?”

I murmured, unintentionally wrinkling my nose.

Something was giving off an intense smell of decay.

“What should we do, Master?”
“Yeah”

I’m the party leader.

I need to make a decision, though I am a pathetic leader that’s not even capable of protecting himself. I can’t rely on Lily and Rose forever.

We should find what’s giving off that smell, but I must consider how we go about it.

Going towards it might be dangerous.
However, there isn’t a safe place in this forest.

This abnormality seems easy to understand, however we should proceed carefully; even small things are dangerous.

“Let’s go.”

I thought for a few seconds.

“Kato-san, is this alright?”
“...Yes.”

I headed towards the source of the terrible smell.

The smell of the forest was faint in comparison to the putrid odor.

Soon, we happened upon the scattered remains of probably five students.

The reason I use such an ambiguous word, “probably,” is because only scattered limbs were visible.

“This… looks terrible.”

Their body parts littered the area, like pieces of partially eaten meat.

From a short distance away, I tried to determine if the threat was still present. After judging that it is most likely gone, we set foot on the site.

“After seeing this, might a large beast be responsible?”

Lily guessed the cause, but I still don’t know.

“Or they got done in by a monster.”
“Maybe.”
“I see. Let’s thoroughly examine the scene, so we might get more details.”

To this end I started walking towards a corpse, and then stopped suddenly.

Unlike with Mizushima Miho, these corpses have been here for awhile.
They are rotting rapidly and flies are buzzing around the corpses.

I seem to be out of my element here, though I am a person that has committed murder.

But, this needs to be done.
People died here, so there’s a clear threat here we need to know about.

This slaughter was in all likelihood perpetrated by a monster, but there is a possibility a human with a cheat ability did this too.

I would regret it if we got killed because we didn’t investigate the hints before us now.

“Well then, time to investigate. …hmm, what is it Rose?”

As I was preparing to move forward carefully, Rose blocked me by raising her arm in front of me.

Instead, Rose stepped forward.

“Is it possible, you want to do it?”

She sent confirmation, through our link.

“H, hey…”

Rose started to move prior to receiving my consent, and started examining a corpse.

She remains silent… …of course, she is not incapable, and she begins examining the dead bodies of the students.

I received a feeling of obligation to do this from her.

“Hey. Shouldn’t Rose patrol a bit, and I will check these things out? I will report to Master later.”

Lily proposed this, but Rose held her hand up to deny this too.

Rose quickly moved from corpse to corpse, checking personal effects.

As for us, we decided to look around a bit nearby.
And in doing so, focused my entire attention on a corpse.

After some thought, it’s apparent, this one wound appears fatal.
Dangerous enough that it was probably the killing blow.

“Master!”

Lily called out a sharp warning.

Although her warning alerted me, because my attention was elsewhere, I’m slow to react.

“Wha—!?”

Looking around, something pops out of the bushes nearby.

“Yaaaa!”

By the time I noticed, Lily was rushing towards it.

It is literally hurtling towards me.

There’s no time for Lily to cast magic.

I don’t use the spear, because I doubt that it was capable of stopping the rush.

“Grrrrraooooo!”
“Kya!?”

Though weak, Lily’s rush successfully diverted the assailant’s rush, even as she got knocked flying.

Its “fang” is positioned towards me, aimed at me and bit not 50 centimeters away.

It recovers its balance and prepares to attack again.
I quickly straighten up and prepare my shield.

Something came jumping down. By the time I recognized the gray wolf, the beast was preparing to leap again.

I face my shield towards it and prepare my body to receive the shock.

Then—*CRASH*.

“Gu, Gwoaar!?”

I am momentarily knocked off balance.

When I crash on the ground, I roll to keep the shield between me and the wolf.
During this time, the wolf’s growling fills the air.

“Woah!”

Suddenly, the pressure from the wolf disappears, and I quickly reassert a defensive stance.

The wolf landed a bit away from me.
At the same time, Rose closes the distance to push the threat away from me.

“You saved me, Rose.”

Rose currently doesn’t have her axe. Apparently, she threw it at the wolf to save me. She definitely saved me, but now, she only has a shield equipped.

“Grrrrr…”

The grey wolf continues to growl.

This must be the wolf called “Fire Fang” that I heard about in the colony before, it has the same characteristics that some guy was talking about…

”Be careful. Rose, watch out for fire!”

As I yelled that out, the wolf opened its mouth like it was preparing to bite.

“GrAoOOoo!”

It spit out flames in my direction.
Rose stepped in front of me without hesitation to shield me from the flames.

—The flames continue to come and threatens to overwhelm Rose’s defense, then it takes a break for a moment.

Flames start to come again—

“Wha… AAAAA—!?”

—as I’m about to swallowed by flames, I’m grabbed to the side.

“Master! Are you OK!?”
“Lily!?”

For the sake of helping me, she modified her body as necessary.

Earlier, after the initial surprise attack, she re-gathered her body and immediately afterwards, saved me from the flame attack.

“Sorry, Lily. You saved me.”
“I’m just glad you’re OK.”

Lily starts to run, and grabs my hand while holding Kato-san’s hand behind her.

“Rose, hold your ground a bit longer!”

Lily instructs Rose sharply.

Rose stops where she is and to blocks the fire that Fire Fang is spitting out. Her stance is heavy, and she resolutely will not allow Fire Fang to pursue us.

Even though Rose is made of wood, she isn't catching on fire, most likely due to innate magic that is protecting her from most of the flame.

After we retreated away, Rose started evasive maneuvers.

The flames of the Fire Fang follow her movements, but she is skillful at avoidance. Her defensive capabilities are higher than I thought it would be on a magical puppet. The flames should have roasted Rose, but after seeing her movements, it's apparent she is taking little damage.

I breathe a sigh of relief.

"Master, that guy, is it alright to beat him?"

Lily is on the ground with me, drawing a magic circle on her palm.

"Permission granted! That guy can't be part of the family!"
"Roger!"

The magic circle on Lily's palm shines bright blue.

—As far as I know, the magic circle is necessary to create magic.

The color of the circle determines the element, and the figure determines the shape and the size determines the power.

It's hard to put it in human terms, but after one month of seeing magical combat, there has been some classification. For combat magic, a circle roughly thirty centimeters in diameter would have the power of a small handgun… and so on.

Lily's magic was created in a few seconds.
It is of the water magic type, with the power of a large handgun, and has taken the form of a sword.

When released, it appears as a sword of water about 3 feet long, and flies like a diving falcon.

"Graoooo!"

Although the sword traveled at was looked like the speed of lightning, the Fire Fang stopped spitting fire and dodged it.

However, that action was what Lily wanted the wolf to do.

"Gyaa!?"

Rose threw her shield at the wolf and smashed its muzzle hard.

…Not that it matters, but Rose has good aim.

While this carefree idea flitted through my mind, Rose rushed at the wolf that was unbalanced and in the air.

It's impossible for the wolf to regain balance while in the air, so Rose bursts with speed ahead.

The lightning fast Rose tackles the wolf to the ground, holding it down.
It made a ruckus as it got pinned.

In the colony, it was known that Fire Fang is stronger than magical puppets. Rose seems OK though, tackling it out of the air with no weapons.

I breathe another sigh of relief.

Originally, the real danger of Fire Fangs is that they travel in a pack. Circumstances as they are though, it seems like Rose will win.

Lily uses wind magic to suffocate the Fire Fang.

"…It's over."

Until the end, I was anxious and worried, my heart heavy with concern.

"That was a bit scary, 'eh. …Kato-san, are you alright?"
"…Yes."

Kato-san nodded and then bowed.
Her facial expression is a bit tight, though mine is likely similar.

"I was useless… I'm very sorry for being so."
"No, I am much the same."

I answer her with a bitter look.

The magical puppet from before that we fought with, we fought it here, of course, there's a possibility to naturally get attacked here. This must be taken into consideration to avoid danger in the future.

We've been surviving thanks to luck.

Also, because of Rose and Lily's diligence.

Also, we were lucky to have been able to hunt the Fire Fang. Lily was able to gain the Fire Fang's sense of smell through her mimicry ability.

Unfortunately, there was no information to be gleaned from the corpses of the students. But, that doesn't matter as much, since I wasn't expecting much to begin with. Maybe it's because they were too damaged by the Fire Fang just now.

After that, we didn't meet any other monsters as we advanced through the forest to the cave.

~ Author's Notes ~

◆ Thank you for reading this far.

◆ The number of hits had jumped the past few days—I was surprised. Or rather, I had the shivers. Apologies, I accidentally mixed my words up.

It is thanks to those who have 'favorited' and rated this work highly. It might be better not to look at the activity report, I would like to take this time to show my gratitude.
Thank you very much.

◆ Since it was longer, I cut it off at a half-baked midpoint.
When I was in the midst of correcting it, the fact that it was longer than the usual... was noticed only after I finished writing.

◆ The next update will be on 21/12 (Saturday).

PREVIOUS - TABLE OF CONTENTS - NEXT
HOME

CREDIT TO ISHMAN FOR EDITING

08. A Doll’s Devotion

Synopsis of the previous chapter:

A relaxed stroll in the forest with the girls.
I had a hot time with them all. (Physically)

Chapter 8.

Before the day set, we decided to return back to the cave that we previously used as our hideout

Lily and rose have night vision so they are our main fighting force, ... or rather, "rose doesn't have sensory organs like eyeballs", unlike us humans.

For those unfamiliar with the forest at night, the danger in advancing through the forest with poor visibility skyrockets.

I am concerned that there is a risk that we could get into trouble were we to stay here too long, so for this reason we returned to the cave and immediately started to prepare a meal.

Today’s dinner is a quite a feast.

After all, we’re eating all of the meat from the two-meter long wolf in one go.

The processing of the meat starts with bleeding it, therefore we left it for Rose; after that we just have to cook the cut-up pieces.

The scent of grilled meat fills the cave.

I unconsciously swallowed my saliva.

Then, the result is...

“Haa...”

I was tricked.

That is, how I honestly felt.

Honestly, this was to be expected.

It looks like rubber but it's hard as rock.

It's not something edible.

Although I have heard that carnivores have tough meat, it doesn't seem to be on that level though. It was wrong on the level of preparation.

I don't know what went wrong though.

I don't even know how to bleed it, so of course, I don't know how it affected the taste.

In the first place regarding the knowledge of how to dress a kill, it seems to have come from a book or something that Mizushima Miho read, and Lily pulled from her memories.

There's also the possibility that monster's meat already went bad.

I now appreciate the excellence of modern Japan's meatpacking companies.

Oh well, although the taste of the food was a bit disappointing, this is a great source of protein.

It has been a while since I was this full; I thoroughly appreciated the food.
Lily didn't seem to think it was bad, she's gulped down the food with enthusiasm.

Kato-san didn't complain about the hard, unpalatable meat, she merely shoveled it down her throat.

"Sorry. ...I will be excusing myself first."

Kato-san must have been tired, she ate her food and immediately went to sleep.

"You must be exhausted."

Kato-san looks small, far from the entrance, and wrapped up in the blankets that were taken from the bed in the cabin.
From her sleeping figure, I could hear her softly snoring.

Coupled with a somewhat young appearance, she doesn't seem all that different compared to me.

I too am a little tired.

I guess I will sleep early today as well.

As I thought that, I moved to my usual sleeping spot in the cave.

Then, Lily released my arm and stepped in front of me.
She turned around with both arms out to embrace me, her lower body in her slime form.

“Go ahead, master”

A surreal spectacle like always.
But, from now on this will be my daily life.

“Lily. Kato-san is...”
“It is fine, she’s already fast asleep.”

As Lily said, Kato-san is softly snoring and comfortably sleeping.

I guess it’s alright.

To begin with, Lily’s true form is not a secret that needs to absolutely be concealed.

At first it was concealed just to be safe, but if it comes down to it I’ll gladly reveal the truth.

With that said, there’s no real need to hide it.

With the first day ending, I am able to roughly grasp Kato-san’s condition.
Of course, she doesn’t have the energy to do anything.

Simply put, she just silently follows us around like a robot merely moving it’s feet.
Not an empty husk, but in a state similar to it.

And then… err.
What was it.

There are probably other reasons, but right now my brain isn’t working too well.

Anyway, I guess it’s time for bed.

Speaking of a full stomach, I didn’t know it gave a sense of being satisfied like this.

I’ll stop trying to stay awake, Lily “was growing” next to where I sat.

I felt like the exhaustion was slowly leaving my body from my back. Involuntarily, “whew”, a sigh leaks out.

“Master, are you sleepy?”

“Ahhh…….”

With a half-hearted reply, I lean against Lily’s delicate body.

“Why Master, you’re quite the light sleeper. You woke quite a few times this morning, you know?”

“...un, ahh, yup”

“Somehow, master, that’s cute”

Saying that in an awfully happy voice, Lily wrapped her arm around my arm.

By the way, Lily is currently wearing the jersey that was looted from one of the guys last night, naturally she has no underwear for her upper or lower body.

Therefore, a blissful elasticity bounced against my upper arm.

It isn’t limited to me, any man would enjoy this.

It may be because my brain is rotten but, it even relieved some of my exhaustion.

Two people on a sofa, snuggling like lovers, I was enjoying this while letting time flow by.

“...Hn? What are you making, Rose?”

As I was turning in for the night, letting my thoughts wander as I fall asleep, my attention suddenly focused on Rose’s arm.

Today rose went on her daily patrol like Lily does, and cut a tree down near the campfire.

I requested that she make arms and armor.

Looking back at today’s battle, if it wasn’t for the large shield she made, I would have been seriously injured, or, even worse, killed. It’s an unspectacular job, but it played a large role.

This Rose is currently shaving a piece of the wood she cut down, and it seems to be different from a weapon or armor.

Rose requested something of me, appearing to hesitate about something.

It's difficult to understand her because her face is flat and doesn't have any facial expressions, but she stopped moving entirely, in order to hesitantly answer my question.

However, Rose is family so it isn't an option to refuse her request.

Rose comes to me and faces me, kneels down on one knee, and reverently holds out the item that she was shaving earlier.

"Sorry for interrupting your work just now. Now, this is… umm"

I am puzzled, so I try turning it over, to look at it as a whole.

"Is it an arm?"

It's still rough around the edges, that would be because it's still in the process of being made.
It was clearly a human body part that had features like an arm.

I am perplexed by this, why would Rose make such a thing, I have no idea why.

When I tilted my neck, Rose held out her arms.

I looked at her arms that she casually presented.

Before the shimmering red campfire, her wooden arm started to shine.

It's rigid.

"Tha- That's…..!"

The tip of the wooden arm.

One of Rose's fingers, it had been charred.

"That time in the battle with the Fire Fang today!?"

My sleepiness got blown away.

"Ah, damnit. I didn't notice at all."

I held my head with one hand, dazed as I was—
That I missed it is exasperating.

“Oi, speaking of, you. Were you keeping it hidden by chance?”

I felt a feeling of discomfort come through the link.

Bullseye.

“Geez.”

I released the air in my chest, blowing it out in frustration.

Can’t be helped, I’m not really in a position to scold her.

Rose probably didn’t want to worry me, so she stayed quiet.

Besides, the frustration that I feel now, it’s more directed at my ineptitude.

I shouldn’t vent on her.

In the future, I need to pay more attention towards her well-being.

But, there is one thing that I would like to confirm now.

“Can we somehow mend it with Lily’s Magic?”

“My recovery magic is only rank three. It cannot heal lost body parts.”

“If I'm not mistaken, recovery magic to heal lost body parts is rank 5, a special rank isn't it.”

My otaku friend usually talks about hot cheat-ability news in great detail, and consequently I also became very knowledgeable about magic. …Thinking back, I wonder if he’s doing fine. But I guess we can’t go back to those days of idle idiotic talks

“I see. That’s why Rose is making a prosthetic arm.”

If it’s like that it makes sense.

That’s what I thought, but after I said it, Rose refuted it by shaking her head.

“What do you mean?”

I’m having trouble understanding, so Rose takes the arm back from me.

Rather than an explanation, it seems she will demonstrate for me.

Rose temporarily places the arm on the ground in front of me.

Then, Rose removes her burnt arm from the elbow, and then attaches the new in-construction arm in its stead.

The parts fits with a ‘Click’, echoing through the cave.

While I watch it, the finger that had yet to be carved suddenly moves.

“...Woah!?”

It might be that because it was just placed, or even, because it is still in the process of being finished, its movement is a bit awkward.

But, it’s certainly moving.

After her demonstration, Rose re-attaches her old arm. Of course, this one moves smoothly since it’s the original.

“By any chance, can you change your components? Like arms or feet?”

Well now, this is a surprise.

As I thought ‘how useful and convenient’, there’s no way it’s possible.

It’s a simple construction, I wonder how the hell it works.

…No, that’s wrong.

It being simplistic is precisely the reason.

Originally, Rose’s body is a wooden doll’s, something that’s not supposed to move. It’s a mystery, most likely monsters have strange powers———maybe it’s magical power.

Thinking along that line, it isn’t weird if the new arm is able to move like the original one.

Rose had remained quiet about the matter of her arm, trying to deal with it on her own.

But, I don’t need any more surprises.

“Rose. I’m going to give you an order now.”

I turned and faced Rose.

“Besides making armor, you will now also make spare arms and legs. ...No, actually, prioritize that. You should always carry spare parts as often as possible.

Rose refusing my command is not an option.
Her consent was sent through our link.

But, I also sensed a sliver of doubt in her, I could feel it through the link my ability created.

“Is it weird, for me to order you to make your own arms and legs?”

To my question Rose gave a nod.

It seems like she really doesn't understand.

I almost let out a sigh.

If she really didn't understand my intentions, how should I say it… heartbreaking.

It’s a sad thing, that is why I feel a certain kind of responsibility.

I felt disturbance inside Rose who seems to have received my feelings.

"I'll just say it but, ‘in the middle of the battle if you lose your hand or leg you can recover fast’ is not the reason that I was thinking of. I won't lie by saying that there is no such thinking, though."

Rose became even more dumbfounded and was completely frozen.
It was very troubling.

How to say it so that she can understand what I mean.
To her who serves me so bravely.

I thought about it, tried rephrasing it, and found a simpler solution.

“Hey, Rose.”

I picked up Rose’s wooden hand, stroking the burnt finger.
It is what Rose had lost for my sake.

Even if it can be restored as if nothing happened, the fact that she had made a sacrifice will not change.

“This might be hard to understand, but I think of you and Lily as extremely important companions to me.”

There isn’t anyone else I can trust in this world except Lily and Rose.

The Family might grow larger in the future, but even then, it’s not like the girls’ will lose their value.

“Well, tend to your body from now on if possible. This is not an order. It is a personal request.”

Me wanting to fight, something like that is probably nothing more than a lie.

Nevertheless, this was my real motivation as of now.

Rose has returned to being just a doll and stopped moving.

As I think about how she can come back from rigor-mortis in just a few seconds, Rose kneeled and deeply lowered her head.

She separated her fingers from me, however a peculiar warmth remains inside of me.

“Please raise your head, Rose. It’s good as long as you understand that.”

Though it is just a vague feeling, and even though Lily and Rose are a family, I feel a slight difference on their stance regarding me.

Lily was quite frank.
There is her tone, but even her attitude is more approachable.

Surely this is because I desired a place to take a load off my mind.

I really am being healed by her.
I believe it is most definitely because Lily consumed Mizushima Miho's remains at that time that she gained the power to mimic humans.

Then, how about Rose's mental structure?

In this respect, I think she is also quite different from Lily.

That is, she is steady and stern.
Just like a soldier, she'll silently accomplish her duty, or something like that.

For example, she did that today.
Facing those students' corpses, she took the lead of the dreary work that would have disgusted anyone else.

Of course there's the problem with feelings, but there's also the possibility to be infected by bad diseases if the rotting corpses were to be touched carelessly.
Lily didn't do that because she had a lot of opportunity to touch me, or so I think.

As the result, Rose did the dirty job alone.
If I think more about it, even today only she know that her finger was lost because of the injury.

—— self-sacrifice from her loyalty.
That is Rose's essence.

If Lily is the healer of my heart, then Rose might be here more specifically to eliminate physical dangers.

Thinking along those lines, then, to make this cruel world a little more secure, Rose will likely comply with my wishes.
Just by looking at her, I can't help but think so.
If that's correct… No, even if it isn't.
Because she didn't have any demands, and her presence became thin, I must not forget her devotion.
I must repay her devotion.
No. I want to reward her myself, I think.

"You should've been able to talk."

What you want, what you expect from me, I want to hear it from your mouth.
"If Master desires it, surely, we will fulfill it some day."
In the place of Rose who doesn't have a mouth, Lily answered my mutters, while hugging me from the side.

"Because, we are family."
"Lily…"

Lily was saying it seriously, her feelings were passed to me.

I am able to feel it.

To my family, created for my sake.
I wonder what can I return to them.

“That’s nice.”

At that time, those words came from Kato-san who was watching us while wrapped in a sheet.

“How enviable.”
“...You were up, huh.”

I almost forgot her existence, and was a little surprised.

Kato-san who had her body wrapped in a slightly dirty white sheet, without changing her posture, had her eyes open and stared at me.

“After all, Lily-san was a monster too.”
“You heard it, huh.”
“The last part, just a little bit. Besides… Lily-san is now in such a form.”

Kato-san saw with her own eyes that Lily’s lower body had become that of a Slime.
I see. I can’t deny that.

“A little while ago, suddenly… I woke up. …I’m sorry.”
“No. That’s probably because I made noise. Besides… that ‘after all’ means that you noticed it since the beginning, right?”
“... yes. That, I’m sorry.”
“It isn’t necessary to apologize. It was me who remained silent.”

If anything, it was me who had a secret to apologize for.

Because there wasn’t a reason to talk about this circumstance, so there’s no need to apologize.

“Just for reference, how did you notice?”
“Let me see. Against the Fire Fang, Lily-san didn’t even move one step.”
“That’s certainly so. But, didn’t you think that she was a person with a cheat ability?”
“She kept calling you Master.”

Well, we were found out.
When I understood that, Kato-san looked down like she was troubled, and then looked at me again.

“... besides, more than anything… because she had the appearance of Mizushima-senpai.”
“You were acquainted with Mizushima Miho?”
“Yes.”

Just for a moment, Kato-san dropped her gaze.
Maybe, she was recalling about Mizushima Miho that passed away.

“I’m sorry that I didn’t say anything.”

Kato-san lowered her head.

“Until yesterday, I was moving together with Mizushima-sempai.”
“I see.”
“You are not surprised?”

As for Kato-san who had confessed another circumstance, wondered about my attitude.

“I had thought about such a possibility. Although only as one of many possibilities.”

There was the common point that both were attacked by those male students.
And, Lily who had Mizushima Miho’s memories, knew of the existence of the male students in that cabin.

Originally, Mizushima Miho with Kato Mana, were together in that cabin.

I did not confirm it with Lily, to have as much as possible, consideration for the privacy of Mizushima Miho.

I do not have the right to do as I would like with the memories of the deceased.
I simply feel indebted to Mizushima Miho. A long as there’s no imminent risk to me, I plan to not touch her “Memories” aside from her “Knowledge”.

“Did Kato-san escape with Mizushima Miho from the colony?”
“Yes. That I was able to live until now… it was thanks to Mizushima-senpai and an acquaintance…”

It was a gloomy voice, but while Kato-san answered my question, she also sounded gentle.

——The day of the Colony’s collapse.

Katou-san was running away along with a group of female students, from the student body that had turned into a mob.

Mizushima Miho was in that group. Their previous connection was not significant now that they were teleported to this world, however, they were still senpai and kouhai from the same club.
TL Note : senpai = senpai, kouhai = underclassman

Like I did, they escaped from the colony, but luckily for them, they received protection from cheat ability users from the Protection Unit.

Unfortunately, the group was broken up by the riot. The two of them, Katou-san and Mizushima Miho, were protected by a boy from the Protection Unit and fled to the cabin.

I don't know how it works but, the mysterious stone in the cabin had the power to repel monsters. The boy from the Protection Unit knew about the stone, so the two girls waited at the cabin with supplies while he went to search for the first Expedition Unit to bring help.

A place not being attacked by monsters, I suppose that cabin was a correct judgement in that regard for a pair of weak females.

He did not take into account the insurgents that destroyed the colony, he didn't take into account the desires of evil people.

As a result, Mizushima Miho and Katou Mana were promptly assaulted by some male students that found the cabin by chance.

It's just that, blaming the male student who chased after the first Expedition Unit, I think that's a bit too severe.

In the first place, the first Expedition Unit was created for the purpose of contacting other humans by escaping the forest; if they perchance withdraw and come back to suppress the insurrection force, since every single one within the expedition were elites with high morals, no one will actually know about the outcome.

Even if they have the advantage in amount of hackers, their war potential will vary.

For example, my Monster Tamer ability is one of the considerably weak classes.

At the same time, it's one of the "Unique Ability" since it's quite rare.

Cheat abilities usually come in the form of physical strength or magical power, such abilities are especially useful in actual combat.

However, that's just the majority.

The ones referred to as "Warriors" usually are in charge of defence of the colony and forest explorations. If I think about the abilities and classify them, then there's "those that manifested abilities that took on easy-to-understand form" category, and a rare category of "abilities that belongs to a class of its own".

Getting off topic.

Anyway, the combat efficiency of hacks is usually high in capacity, there are also some differences depending on type.

As a matter of fact, the body-enhancing hacks are way stronger compared to others; it's quite rare in numbers though. Only a dozen people got those hacks.

Third-year Nakajima Kojiro of the "Sword of light", the student council president from our previous world, was actually leading a new student council in this world, composing of powerful and famous people, and in the same grade of me there's "Void Beast" Todoroki Miya or something I think.

The others are: "Heavenly Dasher" Iino Yuna, Hibiya Kouji of the "Absolute Slash", "Dragon Man" Jinguuji Tomoya; all of which are very well-known.

Although the details of their hacks were not told, it is said that they can easily take on dozens of monsters simultaneously, those are some real premium hacks.

In other words, it's a hotspot of a monster of a student council, that alone is an over-kill.

"Takaya-kun was a typical warrior so…"

The boy from the security force, named Takaya Jun.

He judged that traveling through the forest and protecting two schoolgirls at the same time was impossible.

And just like that, they decided it's best to siege inside the cabin for the near future.

With such a plan, he left the two girls there.

Although the resulted turned out quite miserable, at the time, only god knew if that was for the better or worse.

“...wait a second. Wouldn’t this mean that the First Expedition Unit might be on their way back already?”

I suddenly realize a troublesome dilemma as I listen to Katou-san’s story.

"Yes, probably. It’s up to Takaya-kun’s situation, however.”

“There’s also a possibility that they are coming to the cabin.”

“Yes. ...huh, Senpai? Is this, by any chance, something, bad?”

"It’s not that’s it’s something bad, but...”

Up to this point, we were lurking within the dense forest, so the possibility of encountering other hackers is relatively low.

However, as long as that cabin exists, the possibility that was infinitely close to zero will be changed considerably.

——I do not trust humans.

In addition to that, we’re facing a group of intelligent monkeys; they have absolutely no credit too.

That was the only lesson I learnt from the day of the Colony’s destruction, one filled with despair, disgrace, and violence.

Much more so, each and every one of that group still have powers way beyond what I can resist.

Thinking like such, ditching the cabin was, in fact, the most correct answer.

However, it’s quite troublesome with this Takaya guy knowing about the two girls residing within, if they are not inside then he will know that there are other humans within the vicinity. And this hideout of a cave of ours was not that far away from the cabin. If our luck runs low, there’s a possibility that this place may be found.

I wonder if I should move our base of operations to a faraway location.

This is a question that needs to be considered seriously.

“Huh… Senpai?”

As I get too absorbed in my imagination, Katou-san’s call wakes me up to reality.

“Haha, sorry. What’s up?”

Katou-san stared at me with a serious face.

“There’s something that I wanted to hear.”

“What?”

“What happened to Mizushima-senpai?”

To that question, I hesitated to answer for a brief while.

“...She died.”

I did not deceive her, because Kato-san asked with a resolute expression in her face.

“We dealt with the corpse. The result was that, Lily’s current appearance does not cause any disturbance within me.”

Editor’s Note: Nfi, sorry m8’s

“...Is that so.”

Did she already guess such a thing from her intuition; Kato-san does not seem to be surprised.

However, large droplets of tears begin to fountain from her eyes.

“Mizushima-senpai...”

This girl who was mourning for the death of an acquaintance, kept crying quietly for a while.

“...Sorry. Even though we were in the middle of it.”

Editor’s Note: “it” obviously is referring to their vertical boogaloo - but no really, blame the TLrs

“It’s alright.”

I shook my head.

I hate humans and distrust them greatly, but I am no devil that will blame a young girl for mourning her acquaintance’s death.

“Please don’t mind it. Please don’t be modest about these kinds of thing.”

“Hai.”
Editor’s Note: Hai means okay. :seriousface:

“If Takaya is able to come back with comrades from the Expedition Unit, everything would be great. Then, you will most likely be safe Kato-san.”

I changed my plans.

Although I thought it was a pain in the ass a while ago, in order to secure Kato-san’s safety, it’s necessary to come into contact with those monkeys.

In such a case, that group needs to have their morality properly intact, it does not necessarily have to be the Expedition Unit, but I don’t want to have anything to do with other humans as of now. We cannot rule out the possibility of rapes either.

As previously planned, I will just send Kato-san to them all the while making the least amount of contact as is possible; I do need to see if the group can be trusted or not though. Let’s just go with that for now.

“Is that fine?”

“Yes. ...Well.”

“Hm?”

“Senpai...?”

Kato-san looks up at me from below as I sit on top of the Sofa-part of Lily’s body.
“After you secure my safety… what will senpai do?”

“I will not come along with the Expedition Unit.”

I replied promptly without any hesitation.

Once there’s no Kato-san, I will quickly make my escape from this location.

By all means, me coming into contact with the Expedition Unit was only for Kato-san’s safety.

I will never give up on my family.

“Why? Just like a while ago too... you were making a sour face then.”

Basically, the obvious behavior for the meek Kato-san is: eats and obeys in fear.

But it seems that her condition is getting better, even if such is the case, what was her reason for asking this.

Anyway, I do not intend to lie. Therefore I will honestly answer.

“I don’t trust them. That’s all there is to it.”

“You meant... the Expedition Unit has no credit...?”

“Of course it will be a group that’s trustworthy, they have to be able to at least provide a girl with protection or else that’s no good after all. About me though, it’s on a more fundamental level… it’s the whole human race as a whole."

I shook my head.

My mouth was distorted with a bitter self-mocking grin.

“I personally have a small history with humans, but just to sum it up, I have come to stop trusting others... I just can’t. I decided so myself amidst the fall of the Colony that day."

“...Ah.”

As she hears my words, she realized that she had hit a sore spot. Kato-san loosens her stressed frown sorrowfully.

Even she herself had experienced some that day.

She knows about them. The ugly parts of mankind.

Hence, there is only one difference between me and her.

I, who was saved from death by Lily, a monster, had only seen the ugly parts of those monkeys, while she, who was guarded and helped, would have witnessed humanity’s beautiful side.

...Haha, whatever.

Didn’t Kato-san in a sense already experience more cruel things than I had?

——Trust - let's try just once more..

——It's not, like, every last human is evil.

In this situation, when I said “I cannot trust humans anymore”, she can only conjure sympathy from her heart—for she cannot even begin to imagine, the hell I experienced.

Everything that happened to us up to this point can be considered lucky.

If I have to pick between which one I like doing, I would definitely prefer protecting a girl over abusing her.

Editor’s Note: No, I don’t know how these sentences inter-relate either.

To be honest, the fact that Kato-san didn’t fear me was strange.

If I were her, I would try to run away from me at the first chance I get.

This is not a hypothesis. It’s a physiological matter.

“Senpai... also encountered danger on that day, I see.”

Nevertheless, Kato-san is now feeling pity for me instead.

“...but, senpai, you have the power to control monsters, right?”

“I’ve only awakened to this power after the colony’s destruction, I was saved by Lily in here as I was on the verge of death. ...haha, actually no. I was killed and reborn here in this place.”

The pain was carried along with the voice.

Lily draws closer and embraces me tightly with her body.

I give her my thanks by patting her head, then I sent to Kato-san who was sitting against the wall a question.

“So, Kato-san. I was almost killed by a beating from three of my classmates that I sat next to in class. Just try picturing it. My seat-neighbours laughed and kicked as I roll around on the floor helplessly, they laugh at me with scorn. It was quite a spectacle. After experiencing such a thing, why should I ever think of trusting another human?”

“... then, what about me...?”

Kato-san asks me timidly, I let out a strained smile.

“Didn’t I say that it’s a difficult topic?”

“So-, sorry.”

Kato-san seems ashamed and bows.

“Ho-,However...”

Kato-san looks up, moving her line of sight from Lily who is snuggling up to me then onto Rose’s figure.

“What’s wrong?”

“However senpai… you treasure Lily-san and Rose-san right?”

I see.

I do not trust Kato-san since she’s an ‘other’ as I previously stated, but my behaviour toward Lily and Rose are treated with strangely great trust.

Well, from another’s perspective, this is a mystery.

From my perspective, this kind of nitpicking is a little bit unpleasant.

“They are my family. My companions. They have the credit, and I believe in that credit.”

They cannot be grouped in the same category as humans ——I cannot say the same thing about Kato-san.

But, this is my utmost honest intention.
Editor Note: ????

“Is that, so.”

Kato-san muttered softly.

“...I’m envious, after all.”

I do not know how to answer her.

Indeed, to Kato-san who has no power to fend for herself, my power is something to be envied.

While thinking of such trivial matters, as I cast my mind back to reality, I found her staring intensely at me within the dimly lit cave, I jump in surprise.

A pair of eyes, shining with brilliance, yet within them lingers traces of paranoia, I am being stared at by such eyes.

I think I had seen this somewhere, I then suddenly remember.

It was the same as our first meeting; those are the very same eyes that gazed upon me inside the cabin.

“Mashima-senpai.”

While I was being crushed by the pressure, Kato-san once again opens her mouth.

At that moment, expressions vanished from her face like that of smoke disappearing, instead, a lethargic expressionless face surfaced for but a moment.

...It is just my imagination, right?

“There is also that matter with Takaya-kun.”

“Ha, haha.”

I totally lost the timing to ask.

She might not answer honestly when asked either, but well, things that don’t really matter can stay as matter-not things, I suppose.

At any rate, I have no idea what is going on in Kato-san’s mind, so from now on I will have to be vigilant around her.

I decide so, as I listen to what Kato-san has to say.

“So about Takaya, what’s the matter?”

“Yes. Let’s assume that he came into contact with the Expedition Unit and came back, I don’t know if it’s a good idea to have a face to face meeting with him since ...there’s a problem."

“What do you mean?”

“It’s just... Takaya-kun is Mizushima senpai’s childhood friend so...”

I glance towards Lily.

“Me?”

“Yes. With your current appearance Lily-san, I’m sure he will...”

“Are they a couple?”

“Ah, no. It wasn’t, that way, it’s just...”

Is it hard to say because this is related to other people’s privacy?

“It’s just that, he’s kind of... with Mizushima senpai.”

I understand, such a thing is awkward to be spoken here.

“Mizushima Miho was such a beauty after all.”

I nod deeply.

“Moreover, she has a good personality too. I can’t count the males that I know of that were in love with her with both of my hands. If her childhood friend is a boy then it wouldn’t be strange that he too is in love with her, although it’s a bit cliché.”

Takaya Jun guarded Mizushima Miho and Katou Mana, even leading them to the cabin; his actions were not based on kindness or a sense of duty.

Of course, if we interpret this a bit maliciously then he was doing it with ulterior motives.

“For Takaya, Mizushima Miho is someone that he would stake his life protecting.”

“Yes.”

“When he sees Lily using the appearance of his beloved, he might attack us out of rage.”

“That is correct.”

However, this truly is cumbersome, I have already made the resolution to meet up with the Expedition Unit too.

No. It’s fine. I’ve already decided once.

“Understood. Lily will be lying as low as possible for that duration. And worst case scenario we can just have her cancel her mimic ability when she’s in front of that guy.”

“That should be perfect.”

“Thank you for warning us about the danger.”

All things considered, this piece of information was the result of protecting Kato-san.

Although Kato-san is safe guarded, the risk when coming into contact with this Takaya guy is still there.

If I had not met Katou-san last night, then surely I would have spent even more time in this cave.

We wouldn’t know about the possibility that the Expedition Unit knows about the cabin and is coming back, there’s also the possibility of Takaya encountering Lily in her Mizushima Miho’s form.

Because the bomb’s explosion radius and timer are unknown, it is best to prepare a counter-plan beforehand. At least, that’s what I think.

“Though I can only express my gratitude, I promise to protect you properly until we meet up with the Expedition Unit, or at least until you arrive at a safe location.”

“...Thank you very much.”

Kato-san bows.

Her mouth that was almost hidden away along with her expression by her bangs moved slightly.

“However, to express my gratitude...”

“Hm?”

I asked since I didn’t catch it properly, Kato-san shook her head.

Those are the pair of eyes that shine brilliantly while a trace of paranoia lingers within.

“No. There’s nothing.”

MESSAGE FROM re-Translations :

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09. Encounter in the Woods

Synopsis of the previous chapter:

"…in any case, above all else… it was due to that, Mizushima-senpai's appearance."

"Were you acquainted with Mizushima Miho?"

"Yes."

A second later, Kato-san drops her eyes.

It's possible, that she was remembering the Mizushima Miho that died.

"By the way, Lily's chest, in comparison to Mizushima-senpai's, it seems larger than I remember."

"Ah. I thought so as well."

*As can be seen by Lily's lower half, which is that of a slime, Lily can freely change her body through her mimic ability.

Chapter 9.

A few weeks later.

We are still staying in the cave we have been living in, though I have decided to leave Kato-san in the care of the Expedition Unit.

I spend my nights in the cave, and explore during the day.

This is now my life.

I've encountered monsters several times.

I've stayed alive so far because of Lily and Rose's protection.

It's quite an impressive feat.

However, we have been fighting the monsters whenever we encountered them.

In other words, the original objective of "Increasing the family" has not been going well.

I know there is no other choice but to look patiently, but I am restless.

The biggest problem is that I don't fully understand the conditions in which I can tame a monster.

When I see a monster, I can sense that it's "no good."

I didn't fully understand the case with Rose, since I was panicking at the time, but if I calmly look and consider a monster, I can tell if they can be part of the family or not.

But, I still don't understand the condition.

If I knew the conditions, then we wouldn't have to fight so much.

Recently, I've begun to think the condition has something to do with me.

I don't want to think that way though…

"I'm back."

"You've returned."

Lily has come back to the cave, so I've stopped swinging my wooden sword.

"Ah, you've been training."

to to to
Lily smiles wryly as she runs towards me.

“Quit making that smile.”

“Ok, Why?”

“It’s embarrassing. I’m just passing time with this.”

Recently, in my spare time, I practice swinging my sword as part of my daily routine.

Since I took classes in high school for kendo, I know how to practice swinging a sword.

Without it, I’d just be mimicking what I’ve seen other people do.

Whether there is a point to all the training, to be honest, I have no clue.

Well, it is better to be prepared in the case of an emergency.

At least, I hope I’ll be prepared.

I haven’t got a clue what the future holds.

Well, if I asked someone else what to do, I bet they’d be quiet…

It might be that because nothing can be done, training my body is the correct thing to do.

By the way, I asked Rose to make the sword from a fallen tree that seemed like it would be suitable.

That was a few days ago.

Because Rose doesn’t need to sleep like us humans, she can freely use the night time for other things. With that being said, recently she’s just been manufacturing things according to my instructions.

So I requested as an aside “It’s ok if you make it during your spare time; the blade can be attached later, the grip can be loose, it’s enough that it’s of a certain length and weight.”

But, she instead got excited, and also made me armor.

The day after I made my request, she amazed me with what she made.

——Though it’s made of wood, the blade is shiny and grayish.

——The grip is dark and strong; it also allows for a tight grasp.

——It's lighter than it looks, and the center of gravity is perfect.

——High durability with a sharp edge.

——It gives off an appearance of a practical weapon, though the grain pattern on the sword gives away that it is made of wood.

…odd.

Though I just asked for something to practice swinging.

This is entirely overkill.

Even an amateur like me can tell that Rose poured her soul into making this sword.

She made it a bit too good.

Lily referred to the knowledge of Mizushima Miho and said, "This looks like 'Damascus steel'." While I don't know what that is, it seems to be a famous metal.

It seems I just obtained a sword that was extraordinary.

I would have given this to Lily… but Rose created this for me, with her dedication to me. I did not think it would be a good idea to kill her expectations.

Better not do that then.

Currently, Rose is creating a stock of upgraded parts, to retrofit her body with.

Rose does heavy manufacturing when we go to bed, due to prolonged familiarity with the technique - they'll certainly be completed; upgrades are proceeding as planned.

Though, had I not requested a sword, she may have finished already.

"Sorry Lily, for asking you to go alone."

"Nnn."

As I talk to her, Lily comes over to me like a friendly dog, so I pat her head as she holds onto my right arm.

After finishing up today's exploration, I took a break in the cave, and she had gone out to search for food.
Of course, she also checked to see if the Expedition Unit was around.

This was a job only Lily could do.

This is because, if, by chance, Rose were to come across the Expedition Unit, they would not hesitate to attack her since they cannot differentiate between her and a monster.

With that in mind, Lily in human form would not raise too much suspicion.

Additionally, she gained Fire Fang's keen smell ability.

Although her ability is not as great as the original, it still works to strengthen her senses and raise her searching ability. This also allows her to find the other group while remaining out-of-sight.

However, it would be a problem if Takaya discovered her. But even this situation is slim-chance, at best. At the very least, she should have enough time to retreat and join us.

For those reasons, and because Rose is busy with manufacturing, I relied on Lily for searching for other humans and food procurement.

"Has anything changed?"

Running my fingers through her hair while she clings to my arm, I ask the same question as the last few days.

I can't blame her for not finding them, to be honest, I didn't expect her to be able to.

Even if the Expedition Unit returns to the region, it's still guesswork as to their location.

According to Kato-san's info, Takeya knew the route the Expedition Unit was taking. I don't know if he ever ended up finding them.

Six days after the Expedition Unit left, the rebellion in the colony started.

Like this, both Kato-san and I just barely escaped.

I holed up in this cave for three days during the fallout. Takaya escorted his small group using his cheat ability, which gave him extra physical strength.

She said that Takaya left after they found the cabin in order to catch up with the Expedition Unit, but even for him, trying to catch up to a week's worth of distance would be tough. Especially when they were still continuing on.

Even when he does catch up, they will still take awhile to turn around and cover the same amount of distance on the return trip.

For those reasons, I wasn't really expecting them to come back any time within the week. It'd be nice if it was sooner though.

"You know that cabin… the cabin with the barrier mark. I found some traces there."

With this, Lily's words surprise me.

"Someone from the Expedition Unit has returned?"

"I don't know; in accordance with your orders master, I returned immediately."

"I see. Hmm… something is odd. It's way too early."

"It might not be the Expedition Unit, it seemed to be only one person."

Lily presented another possibility.

"There is only one person?"

"Yup. It wouldn't make sense for a student of the Expedition Unit to be alone, it could be another survivor. Even master is a person from the colony that has managed to stay alive."

"Certainly, there's that possibility too."

There's often dangerous monsters roaming the woods, but with care, avoiding them is not that hard. It's possible to not even see one for a day or two.

While some monsters like the Fire Fang have high tracking abilities, staying in a place like this cave helps to avoid them.

In the end though, it depends on luck - as even a man without a cheat ability can wander about without being hunted.

In fact, a month after we were teleported to this world, the Expedition Unit was formed.

Since I was a part of the Stay Behind Group, I don't know all the facts, but it's possible that it's a residual effect of the Expedition Unit that this region is safer.

It's possible because Takaya, who knew the Expedition Unit's path, knew of the existence of the hut.

To ensure the safety of the colony, the Expedition Unit also moved with a priority towards clearing monsters.

Therefore, the path of the Expedition Unit and a radius around it are relatively clear of monsters.

Thinking about it now, it only makes sense if the monsters were hunted.

Regrettable. Well, there's nothing to be done about it now.

Come to think of it, it's really lucky they didn't find Lily during that time.

Because I met her, my fate has been better.

"Whether it's a student or someone else, we should go and confirm it."

I made my decision.

"Whether it's a member of the Expedition Unit, or a survivor from the colony, we need to ascertain whether or not it would be safe to leave Kato-san in their care. "

"…it'd be nice if it went so well."

I noticed that Kato-san was nearby and heading towards us.

Recently, she's begun to look healthier.

She still looks haggard, but she no longer looks so depressed.

There are even times, such as meal times, that she shows a bit of a smile.

“If the person we find doesn’t have a cheat ability… what will we do?”

Like this, it became necessary for us to check it out.

This is, a good trend.

Due to Kato-san’s circumstances, her wariness was raised to an extreme state.

“Sure…”

I consider Kato-san’s response.

“Whether we get information directly from the person, or through observation, the end objective is still the same.”

“…what do you mean?”

“If the other person doesn’t have a cheat ability, there’s no benefit to contacting the person. But, if they do, they might be part of the Expedition Unit associated with the colony.”

“Ah. There’s that possibility. I’ll be right back.”

Lily expressed her agreement and left to prepare.

I continued on.

“Alternatively, this person might have information on the status of the colony. To find out this information, it makes sense to contact the person.”

“I…see, Thank you very much.”

Kato-san lowers her head and bows to me.

With no more reasons not to, we prepared to leave the cave.

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We move through the forest, marking our path on the trees.

Lily, with Fire Fang's sniffing ability, can sense any potential danger around us. This gives us a greater amount of peace of mind as compared to before we encountered the Fire Fang.

Still, no point in being reckless, we continued on carefully.

And fortunately, did not encounter any monsters.

When we arrived at the cabin, it looked nothing like it had when we first saw it.

After I destroyed the barrier stone, the cabin looks like it was destroyed by monsters.

Now, there isn't much left of the cabin except debris, and with monsters able to wander by, I wouldn't expect even that in a few weeks.

Soon, it might even appear that there wasn't a building here before at all.

Now though, there was a figure of a male student wandering around the ruins.

He seems a bit taller than me and a bit more muscular as well.

The atmosphere around him seems frivolous though, what with the high school uniform the boy is wearing that is only common to Japan.

The boy is wandering about the ruins and occasionally bends down to inspect something.

…What is he thinking.

Well, that was what came to mind when I first saw him.

If he can guess that the cabin was destroyed by monsters, he should not remain in this place for a long time.

In fact, I was half torn to leave the trail towards the cabin and have Lily search the region around it, but it doesn't seem like that will be necessary now.

"Is he with… the Expedition Unit?"

Kato-san muttered the same question I was thinking as well.

If he was with the Expedition Unit, then it's entirely possible for him to wander about nonchalantly with the threat of monsters looming.

His behavior indicates that he does not care about the threat of monsters, and that can also be said of the carelessness of the strong. But…

“No, it’s different.”

I rejected these opinions.

Simply put, he’s just not aware of the danger in the first place.

It’s evident.

“He’s a part of the Stay Behind Group.”

“Do you… by chance, know him?”

“Ahh”

I bitterly bit my lip and watched the boy walking around the ruins, kicking at debris in frustration, then nodded.

“It’s a classmate.”

* * *

After some consideration, we decide to split up.

Just in case.

I, accompanied by Lily, approach the hut.

I can hear the boy grumbling about a short distance away.

“Yo, Kaga.”

“Hiiii!”

It seems he was in deep concentration.

When I called him from behind he jumped in surprise and ducked behind some wreckage.

"… oy oy, don't run away."

It looks like he thought I was a monster. After I called again, he stopped trying to desperately hide.

From his actions, I was convinced that Kaga was a part of the Stay Behind Group, and that he had no cheat ability.

"You're…"

Kaga's face changed to one of relief.

"Is that really… oooh, that's Mizushima-san!"

After he noticed her, his attitude changed.

He was that kind of guy.

Even saying that, I don't really know the guy all that well anyways.

Kaga was a classmate of mine, but only to the extent of us greeting each other. We were never friends or even talked all that much.

I don't really like his type all that much.

It's probable that the feelings were mutual.

"You were safe!"

"You as well, Kaga."

Kaga came forward to grab the hands of Lily, but I stepped in front of him and blocked his path.

"In all that confusion, you did well to stay safe."

Because I thought it would end up like this, I prepared myself for it.

As I expected, Kaga moved as I thought he would.

It's likely we won't get along this time as well.

"Majima."

He looked at me with brazen eyes when I blocked his way.

“I see you’re doing ok as well. How is it that you’re with Mizushima-san, Majima?”

Kaga’s eyes kept flicking back to Lily while he was talking to me.

“Ah…”

I swallowed my unpleasant feelings and pressed on.

There’s no sure way to do this.

Lily is a beautiful woman. Her kindness stands out as well.

Though that’s hard to say since she’s always smiling to me.

“…’Mizushima-san’ and I we escaped in the confusion of the rebellion, luckily.”

I consciously kept my tone to a casual everyday conversation level.

“And like that, we’ve been working together up till now.”

I wonder if it went well?

Before coming to this world, did I have to lie all that much?

…I don’t remember.

The peaceful days of the past, even though it was just a few months ago, it seems like it was a long time ago.

“I see.”

Fortunately Kaga doesn’t look too suspicious.

This is probably because Kaga isn’t really paying attention to me rather than my oh-so-charismatic lie.

Kaga was still flicking his eyes at Lily, but eventually stopped and turned to me.

“Kaga also escaped from the colony, huh.”

“Ahh. I felt like I was going to die.”

“Your luck seems to be good.”

“Ahh. Glad to see you.”

“Yeah.”

Kaga was unlikely to lie in this type of conversation, so I managed to get a supportive response.

I can’t easily tell when a person is lying, so this is easier.

Better to be safe than sorry.

Of course it’s like that.

This survival sense is the new norm for me.

I don’t have thoughts of “All you humans should go die,” or those of an end boss.

Well it’s not like I can become a hero either, with my distrust in humans.

“I just got here today, were you two staying in this cabin, Majima and Mizushima-san?”

“That would be impossible.”

This time, I was not able to hide my surprise.

“We’re living in a cave that is hidden and inconspicuous.”

“Heh, a cave. How primitive.”

“Being primitive is better than this place. …did you not notice that this place was destroyed by monsters?”

“What!? Really!?”

Kaga turned to me in surprise causing me to release a small sigh.

“Why would humans destroy a place like this… and this level of damage is not caused by natural decay. If you examine closely, you’ll see the signs.”

The evidence was clear in the destruction of the cabin, it could only be monsters.

Kaga took some time to examine the ruins more carefully… and said nothing more on the matter.

“Well then, let’s get out of here quickly then.”

“Yea.”

Kaga seems to panic and urges us to quickly leave.

“Now that I consider it, you guys have done well to stay safe so far. Is there someone else with a cheat ability with you two? Majima and Mizushima-san should both be part of the Stay Behind group, right?”

Kaga asked worriedly.

In his voice he sounded troubled.

So I respond with a question.

“Isn’t that the same case as yours?”

“If there was such a guy, I wouldn’t leave his side. I’ve just been lucky so far.”

“We’re much the same. We ran away desperately and managed to escape relatively unharmed. We even managed to pick up a few things like this.”

I slapped the wooden sword that was at my waist.

“It was taken from a magical puppet.”

Kaga makes an odd face.

“…huh? Isn’t there something off about that?

“…I just picked it up, so I don’t really know anything about it.”

In fact, Rose made it with her fighting spirit.

“Even though I have this, we don’t really fight monsters. I use it mostly for self-defense… or for hunting small animals for food.”

“I have been surviving on the food from the colony.”

“You’re a shrewd guy.”

Kaga laughed loudly and pointed at the backpack.

This guy, probably survived up till now because he’s clever.

Is it his strength or just pure luck though, I can’t really tell.

And so as we talked, we walked through the forest.

After awhile, my breath got ragged because I usually leave all the hard work to Rose.

Leaving aside Kaga, “Mizushima Maho” occasionally helped me.

“Somehow, Majima ended up with Mizushima-san huh.”

“It just happened.”

“In regards to the cave, is it close by?”

“It’s up ahead. Be careful though, it’s still about an hour ways away.”

“Is it only you guys?”

“Yeah.”

Along the way, Kaga has been asking a lot of questions.

I’m concerned, but it’s not unreasonable. A lone person usually desires some conversation.

It could be interpreted as thus.

It’s not good to think about the unnecessary. Just need to focus on getting back safely.

“So then, I went to the cabin because the Expedition Unit might pass by that way.”

“There’s still time, it will take time for them to get back. There’s no guarantee they’ll even pass by there anyways.”

“It’s enough though! We’ll survive until then!”

“Yeah.”

I continued on the path back to the cave while answering appropriately.

We eventually stopped questioning each other and the conversation degraded into something like small talk.

“Come to think of it, wasn’t there someone fighting the monsters in this area?”

“Did they get ripped apart?”

I recall the students we found a week back. I spent some time to search for others but never found any other corpses.

“I was still hiding. Did something happen?”

“No. It was a guy from the Expedition Unit by himself.”

“…What? Is that true?”

This was information I didn’t know

I raised a hand to stop Kaga involuntarily.

“Ah. It must have been a guy with a cheat ability that wasn’t assigned to the Expedition Unit, but instead to the colony defense.”

“I didn’t… take notice of that.”

“He was just some guy I didn’t really know. I guess his ability wasn’t as useful so he wasn’t included in the Expedition Unit.”

“…I see.”

Kaga was keeping some information to himself, but I'll let it be for now.

If this guy wants to withhold information, I will do so as well.

But, if what Kaga is saying is true, it could be bad.

This guy that can kill monsters with his cheat ability is an unknown, and should be taken into consideration.

Alternatively, he could be thinning the forest of monsters to keep the students safe… I shouldn't assume the worst.

Either way, I should move my base.

Though, I need to consider that since he's killing monsters, that means this area is relatively safer…

No, that's too optimistic.

We should definitely move anyways.

While I was considering these things, Kaga was chatting up Lily behind me.

I told Lily to just respond curtly and with a smile. If she talked too much, her true character might get revealed.

Fortunately, Kaga only seemed to want to impress her.

Even so, for awhile now I've been wondering about his situation. He's trying to get along with women.

Though he knows it's unlikely, he still tries hard.

"We've arrived."

"Hmm. So this is the place."

We returned to the cave without running into any major problems.

Kaga looks around curiously.

While I recovered my breath from the hike back, I watch Kaga carefully.

“Then from now on I’ll ask you for help with various things, such as gathering food and supplies. We’re short on people here.”

“I know. Oy oy. Don’t nag me. You trying to be the leader?”

“I didn’t have that intention. In the first place, there’s no need for a leader with only three people.”

“You got that right.”

Heh heh heh Kaga laughs and cracked his knuckles as if he just realized something.

“Come to think of it, we need to talk about something first.”

“We need to talk about something? What’s that?”

“Eh, how do I say it.”

Kaga takes a position of thinking about it with absolute arrogance.

“Before that… can Mizushima-san go to the back of the cave?”

“Why?”

”This is a talk for men only. You get it?”

This guy, what’s he going on about.

Like that, Kaga lowered his voice and closed the distance between us.

“This was said earlier, by the Expedition Unit.”

“Expedition Unit?”

I lower my voice as well.

“Ahhh. Nobody knows when those guys will return… in the first place, how are they even going to get back. You want to hear what I’ve got to say?”

If this guy is for real, I should listen to him.

Though I don't get why he doesn't want Mizushima Miho to hear this.

However, from Kaga's expression, cede this point.

No choice.

I put "Mizushima Miho" out of my mind.

"I get it. Are you okay with that 'Mizushima-san?' Please go on ahead of us."

"Un. I understand."

With a nod, she disappears into the cave.

Then I turn around and face Kaga again.

"And so? Continue the story about the Expedition Unit…"

"Idiot. Mizushima-san might still be able to hear it."

Kaga blocks my request like that.

"This story is very graphic. That's why Mizushima-san shouldn't hear it. Let's go a ways away."

Without waiting for my reply, Kaga started walking.

And with that, I sigh heavily and follow after him.

PREVIOUS - **TABLE OF CONTENTS** - **NEXT**
HOME

10. Settlement in the Woods

Synopsis of previous chapter:

Kaga: “Majima-kyun! We’re best friends, yo!”

Hero: “(…suspicious)”

Chapter 10.

Following Kaga, who was leading the way within the middle of the woods.

After I met Rose and Lily, I’ve always acted together with them. It’s a strange feeling now.

I’m not some small kid yearning for his mother—at least I think so, but somehow I feel a little restless.

"But, I'm really saved because you managed to stay alive. ‘course to Mizushima-san as well.”

While I was thinking such things, Kaga unexpectedly said this. He never looked back at me, so I could not see the expression on his face.

“Yeah. I'm also thankful that you survived Kaga."

I returned those words to the back of his school uniform.

"In order to survive, let's work together from now on."

“Damn right man. Since it's a situation like this, we gotta join forces.”

“I appreciate you saying so, Kaga.”

“Right back at cha. I'll also ask the same of you, Majima.”

“Ahh. —by the way, Kaga. About that thing you were talking about before…”

“Huh? Oh, yea, here’s about good.”

We ended up at a clearing within the forest.

Kaga considered it a good enough location, so he stopped walking and turned to me.

The surroundings haven't changed that much, which makes this place difficult to discern from other locations, but we are not too far from the cave.

Since I’ve been living in the cave for awhile, even if I’m not entirely sure where I am, I should be able to return to it.

If necessary, I can lose Kaga and easilly return to the cave by myself.

While thinking such things in the back of my mind, I cut back to the chase.

"Just a second ago, Kaga, you were saying something about a 'story about the Expedition Unit' weren’t you."

“Ah. I did say that, didn’t I.”

“Let me ask a question first. How do you know about the Expedition Unit?”

“Well, I got along with one of the senpai from the Expedition Unit.”

“Senpai… Senpai, huh.”

I let the words roll from my tongue.

Of course, I don’t know anyone in the Expedition Unit. So I’m a little suspicious of my classmate to know a senpai in that group.

“Yea, a senpai I know from club.”

“That’s right, you were in the tennis club, Kaga.”

“Yup Yup.”

Kaga laughs gaily.

“Because of this, I know the plans of the Expedition Unit. This is information that shouldn’t be spread carelessly.”

“Yea, definitely.”

I showed consent to Kaga’s opinion.

If it’s true, then Kaga’s insistence on secrecy was correct.

Kaga is grinning cheerfully, whether it’s because I agreed with him or for another reason, I don’t know.

I decided to push the conversation forward.

“So then, what kind of information is it?”

“Let’s see.”

I show a posture of listening carefully, but Kaga suddenly breaks into a grin.

“By the way Majima, have you already done it with Mizushima-san?”

“Wha?”

"Don't try to fool me. You two were alone together. You were alone with a beauty like her. Even if it's the ‘oh so serious’ you, I won't let you tell me that you didn't think about it."

"...Just what, does that have to do with anything at the moment?"

“It does relate, doesn't it.”

Speaking in slightly quieter voice, he replied in a tone as if it's obvious.

“From now on, if I have to share a secret, you need to as well. If you can’t agree to this, we can’t work together. Of course, I can’t tell you the story either.”

“If it’s like that, why does it matter whether or not Mizushima-san and I have a special relationship?”

"Because it's important. Consider it. There's one chick and two guys. If we don't make it clear who Mizushima-san belongs to, it will cause a conflict."

“Mizushima-san is no one’s possession.”

“Ahh ahh. You can drop the act already.”

Kaga shook his hand as if something was annoying.

“Let’s stop the bullshitting, and state our real intentions. Be honest. Alright, Majima bro. Consider if you and I fought over one woman. Wouldn’t that be bad?”

“To begin with, this situation is infatuation: it’s a waste to think about.”

“So then, that means you never laid your hands on Mizushima-san? You’re an idiot, Majima. Even in this kind of situation. Unexpectedly, you’re a dull guy, did you not consider pushing it with this situation?”

“As if I could do something like that.”

“Hah, I’m no pussy.”
“Hah, suprisingly you don't have any balls.”

“Shut it.”

I scowled and turned away.

“It has nothing to do with you.”

“Nothing to do with me?”

Kaga laughed at me and took on a tone of amusement.

"It… Does have something to do with me!"

Suddenly, I hear a laugh of derision clearly behind me.

And the sound of someone kicking the ground.

My reaction time is slow as I turn around.

“Oof”

I get hit on the cheek.

His knuckles connected to my cheekbone.

I couldn't withstand it, and got knocked to the ground.

“Ugh”

He attacks again. He kicks my chin up.

If I didn’t pull my tongue back, I could have ended up biting through my tongue.

This relentless assault, it feels like he’s done this before.

“Get knocked out bitch!”

Kaga's annoying ridiculing sounds reach my ears.

"Showing an opening in this situation, There's a limit to how naïve you can be!"

“Gah!?”

Now, he hits me in the stomach.

And a weight disappears from my waist.

He took my sword.

"...What're you trying to do."

I look up miserably from the ground, and Kaga has a triumphant expression on his face while wielding the sword.

“Oy, Kaga. What the fuck are you doing?”

“Do you not know what position you’re in, bitch?”

Kaga’s eyes were bloodshot with excitement as he observed me carefully.

If I were to show even the slightest intention to retaliate, Kaga would probably swing down the sword without hesitation. After ascertaining that, I couldn't move carelessly.

“Don’t worry. I’ll be sure to give Mizushima-san your regards.”

“Regards… Do you think you can? How are you going to explain this to Mizushima-san?”

“You, you’re really an idiot. We’re in a different world, aren’t we? As such, you got done in by a monster.”

“After you suspiciously invited me into the forest, do you really think that’s believable?”

“It doesn’t matter if it’s believable. You guys were only two people right? After you’re gone, it’ll be just Mizushima-san. It won’t even matter.”

“I see.”

I’m convinced it might work, and Kaga shows a disgusting smile.

“You are trash.”

“Say whatever you want.”

With a sneer, Kaga lifted the sword.

“Anything that comes out of your mouth is just the bitching of a loser.”

“I guess.”

I emotionlessly look up at Kaga.

“…?”

While he’s raising his sword, Kaga’s face looks at me questioningly for a moment.

This guy probably thought I’d be crying and screaming, begging for my life desperately.

Kaga seems to be disappointed that I am not acting how he imagined, but he hasn't thought about the reason behind it.

He's that kind of person.

I already knew that.

From the very beginning, I knew that.

"Die!"

He swings the sword down at me.

I'm still lying down pathetically. At this rate, I'll be killed like a moron, who isn't able to resist at all.

But, I wasn't particularly worried.

"Watch out!"

A figure dashed between Kaga and myself.

"Huh!?"

Kaga voiced his surprise, but due to the momentum of his swing, he can't stop it.

A girl wearing a jersey took the blow meant for me, the sword sliced through her head and throat, burying deep into her body.

"Ah, uh… geh."

The girl’s mouth garbled some meaningless sounds.

“A, AaaaAAAAAA…!”

Kaga screams and pulls out the sword.

As the sword is pulled out, the body of the girl who lost her support collapses onto the ground.

Her flaxen hair covering her face, “Mizushima Miho” collapses face down.

“AAH, damn it! Why did it end up like this.”

Kaga lamented his misfortune loudly.

I wonder if he felt something because he committed the act, maybe he felt guilty.

…that’s wrong.

“What a waste! Even though I don't have the hobby of giving my regards to a corpse.”

There was zero regret in his voice.

“Kaga. You…”

“It ain’t my fault. I’m not the bad guy here! You should have just behaved and died properly!”

Kaga swung his sword up again in selfish anger.

His face distorted in frustration like a man who is unable to satisfy himself.

I look at the ugliest expression in the world—

“That’s enough.”

—I muttered.

”Unn?”

Kaga raises his eyebrows at my words.

But, I have no obligation to answer him.

I’ve already put up with enough.

I even gave him a chance.

The one that blew it away, it was all Kaga.

So—

“It’s enough, Lily.”

—I quietly issued my order.

“You, Majima. What are you mumbling… hiii!?”

As Kaga was saying something foolish, he suddenly backs away screaming.

“Gaah… gii, ahh.”

The girl that was collapsed on her face slowly rose.

Kaga's eyes are open wide as he stares at Lily, who is starting to stand up.

I couldn't see Lily's face, but it's probably a bit grotesque at the moment.

"Uo, a… a, A, AH-. UH-"

Lily shook her head a few times.

The clear-ish creamy liquid that was falling from her body was getting absorbed by her feet.

"Uh-, Uh-"

Her voice was garbled, but it slowly became clearer.

"Uh-, Ah-. …Un. Is it ok now?"

When she turns to face me, the cut that marred her head was already gone.

"…That surprised me a bit."

Lily says that in a voice as if nothing had happened.

"What happened?"

"When my head was cleaved, I lost consciousness for a bit. It's a problem associated with my mimic ability."

Mimic slimes, like Lily, originally are organisms that don't have a thinking organ.

However, when she creates a brain with her ability, she uses that to think… …so when it is destroyed, it took some time for her to recover.

“Also, Rose’s sword is really terrifying. The heck was that. It cut through me like I was nothing.”

“Sorry for letting you get hurt.”

“Un. I don’t really mind though. This level of pain is nothing to worry about. You got hurt though, master.”

“It’s only a scratch.”

“Lies. You’re just trying to endure it. …Ah, no. You’re bleeding. Geez.”

Lily approached me with her palm filled with a white healing magic circle, then stroked my cheek lovingly.

Then, for the first time when I looked up at her she had a reproachful look on her face.

"As long as I am ordered to, I can immediately support you with magic, you know."

“…my bad.”

Originally, when I give up on Kaga, I gave Lily instructions to use a magic attack.

Even so, because of my delayed judgment about Kaga she hesitated to attack him, as a result I let her go through a painful experience.

“My condition doesn't matter at all.”

“Lily…”

“Please don’t be so reckless.”

Lily’s hand strokes my cheek down to my chin, then let’s her hand drop away. My minor injuries have been healed completely, and I feel no pain.

“Wha, What the fuck is this!”

Kaga, who we had been ignoring, was panting hard, as if he was panicking.

“Mi-Mizushima-san, that’s, you…Right?”

Kaga’s eyes frantically darted about, and when they came to Lily, her true character was reflected.

When Kaga's eyes met with Lily's he was shivering a lot, as if he was afraid, almost as if he was running away from her, his gaze moves to me.

“Th…This, wh, what is the meaning of this? What are you trying to do!? Why, why, Mizushima-san…and you…”

I shrugged.

“Did you think I didn’t stand a chance?”

“Ah…?”

“If that’s the case, you were naive. Not about the current situation, but your thought process as a whole.”

Kaga didn’t seem to understand my words before.

Probably since our first reunion in the forest, this is probably the first time Kaga is thinking straight.

Within those opened eyes, I saw countless thoughts crossing each other. Finally, it seemed like Kaga understood what I said.

“Y, you… I see. Now I see!”

Kaga who finally understood the situation glared at me with bloodshot eyes.

“You bastard, Majima! You set me up didn't you!?”

“You’re an idiot. The one who got fooled so simply was you.”

The truth is severe.

I definitely have my share of secrets.

I quietly accept the responsibility, that I was the one who fooled him.

However, it was Kaga himself in the end, who chose this result.

I thought to give him a chance to show himself, but in the end he squandered it, his humanity clearly rotten.

Even more so, he went so far as to isolate me in the woods and kill me.

“Do it, Lily.”

Kaga might give up some information, but looking at his face twitching in anger and fear, that’s not likely.

I considered that he might also have a cheat ability, but it seems he doesn’t.

This guy was only a fool getting by with luck.

No. He’s just trash, maybe even lower than that.

It’s not worth listening to him anymore.

“God damn itttttttt!”

Kaga screams in desperation and charges wielding the sword.

Lily counterattacks back with her bare hands.

Within the forest, the dull sound of a neck being broken reverberated.

＊ ＊ ＊

“Is it over?”

“Yah.”

Kato-san who was being escorted by Rose, asks, and I answered succinctly.

“Good job on the hard work.”

“Not at all. I’m not even tired.”

I shook my head.

In truth, I didn’t do anything particularly tiring.

From the beginning to the end, it was within estimation.

—From the time when I saw Kaga at the cabin.

We decided to split up, and I planned to contact him.

Originally, I was just going to observe him a bit, but with the cabin being destroyed by monsters, it was likely Kaga would get killed as well, and there was always the possibility that he had information.

Rose and Kato-san’s group watched over us after we split up.

Having more people, for the purpose of getting Kaga’s measure, would have been inconvenient. For that reason, they remained hidden.

Though, it also raised the risk that we would get attacked by monsters while by ourselves.

Therefore, I asked them to observe at a distance as much as possible.

In contrast, I had Lily who went with me, play the role of the "bait" that would judge Kaga's character.

Additionally, I also asked her to play the role of being my bodyguard.

Even without Kaga's invitation into the woods, I would have done something else to test Kaga's character.

It went a bit different that what I had planned, but it could be said it was all within calculations.

Of course, if Kaga had shown his character to be true, then I would have protected him. I would have treated him the same as Kato-san. Though I wouldn't have thoroughly trusted him either, I would have taken up the responsibility to protect as much as my ability would allow.

Regardless, it ended up as it did.

"…This, is he dead?"

"Yah."

Because Kato-san asks, I answer and give a small nod.

"I am, the one who killed him."

Come to think of it, I wonder how Kato-san sees this scene.

Here lies Kaga's corpse, but it could have been Kato "if" things were different.

Kato-san and Kaga. Neither of them knew the truth about Lily originally, though Kato-san's situation was considerably different than Kaga's.

Even if it didn't happen, I can't deny that I thought about a situation where I had to kill Kato-san.

Thinking normally, she would be discomfited by this.

More likely, she would feel even more fear.

Then, overwhelming fear easily distorts people.

Like the students in the colony who panicked.

I became like this, because I experienced their violence first hand.

It’s also possible, that because Kaga was wandering the forest for a long time, his conscience faded away.

Kato-san probably isn't exempt from this.

At the very least, after seeing the death of Kaga, Kato-san’s thoughts on me will probably change.

I quietly looked at Kato-san.

Kato-san is looking down at the corpse of Kaga with no emotions.

Then she turns her eyes towards me.

Strangely enough, I didn’t sense any distrust or hostility from her gaze.

“I understand your feelings, Senpai.”

On the contrary, all my expectations are betrayed when she says that.

“…Humans, are untrustworthy.”

Kato-san muttered.

“Trustworthy ones are…”

Kato-san quietly stares at me.

Moreover, she had those eyes again.

I can’t understand what this girl is thinking after all.

It’s probably, that since the beginning, I didn’t get a good read on her.

Just what the heck could she be plotting.

…Or, is she not plotting anything at all?

It’s possible that I can’t read her, because she isn’t thinking anything bad…

“Kato-san is…”

I started to say, but suddenly I felt dizzy.

“Ah.”

I stagger.

And start to fall down.

“Ma-Master!?”

Lily is nearby and quickly moves to support me.

Thanks to that, I didn't ungracefully collapse to the ground.

However, I'm still looking at the ground.

"Are, are you okay?"

"…aahh. Are you, just a bit tired?"

It's weird.

From the beginning till now things were going to plan. Nothing I did should have made me this tired.

Even stranger, my body seems heavy.

"Anyways, let's return to the cave for now."

"U, un. Let's do that. You'll be able to sleep comfortably soon."

In a panic, Lily dragged me back to the cave.

At this time, I would only notice it a long long time from now, that I had forgotten something important.

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11. A Doll’s Embrace

Synopsis of the previous chapter:

Lily: "Uuu, Ahh-... aa... ... Uuh, uuuh?"

Hero: "It wasn’t healed, it wasn’t healed."

Chapter 11.

I've sunk in deep.

Sunk in such depths, that I was unable to rise, the darkness is stifling.

And so, I have been plunged into it again and again.
The things you do not even want to see, touch, smell, nor hear.

Many times.
Yes, many times.

Even if I cried or yelled out, help will not come for me.
Because there is no one else here.

I am... alone.

Because I am sinking deeper, by myself.

"... ..."

It was at that point of time.

I heard something.

This is... the voice of someone shouting from afar?

If I listened hard, it sounded like it was calling out for someone.

Calling out... ...

... ... For whom?

".....! ..... Ah!"

The darkness surrounding me wavered.

The voice continues to call out.

Each time, my existence feels like it is being shaken.

My consciousness sways... ... My body is being shaken.

That voice that has been calling out for someone, I finally noticed that it was calling for me.

"-ter!"

My consciousness had been swimming through mud. I became aware that I was in a dream.

Once you realize that, it is not that difficult to pull yourself from the depths of the darkness after all.

"Master!"

I woke up with a shock.

"Ha-, ha-, ha- ... ..."

Breathing is tough.

My breath tinged with unpleasant warmth.

Fighting back the dizziness, I blink rapidly, behind my eyelids, a bonfire of a burning forest flashes.

It seems that I have been asleep.

Wasn’t there an incident involving Kaga... ...

Yes, immediately after that, we returned to the cave.

I was only going to get a little rest for my body until it was time to eat, but I accidentally fallen asleep.

"Haa..."

While coughing occasionally, I focused on trying to adjust my breathing for a while, finally taking a deep breath.

It was like... ... seeing a very horrific dream.

I did not remember the contents.

I did not even want to remember.

"Are you okay, Master? Was it perhaps a nightmare?"

From the edge of my field of vision, a towel was held out.

It seems that it has been there waiting for me to calm down the entire while.

"Oh, oh... My bad."

I took the proffered towel with both hands and pressed it to my face.

Most of the sweat from the nightmare had already dried.

My head feels heavy. Perhaps it was because I was awakened in the middle of my sleep, there seemed to be an illusion that I had left behind a part of my brain in the nightmare.

Nightmare.
Swimming in the depths of darkness.

My whole body started trembling.
Perhaps it was the cold, or some other factors, that caused it.

"You were sweating a lot. Leaving you in that state would probably cause you discomfort. Shall I wipe down your body?"

It seemed that my trembling was interpreted as a reaction from the cold, a voice that was full of concern came from beside me.

"Please take off all of your clothes. I will wash it."
"Oh. Okay."

Almost like a child, I nodded obediently.

I wonder if it was because I had a nightmare.
The fact that there are people who were willing to worry about me, seemed to be terribly reassuring.

If this is what being a child is like, I would even laugh at myself.
Even so, if there was a possibility of regaining the carefreeness to laugh...

That’s why... ... that’s why.

"Hm?"

I, who is finally comfortable around people, suddenly remembered my discomfort while covered in a thick towel cloth.

In other words, ‘From a little while ago, who the hell was I talking to?!’ was an overdue thought that came to me.

"What seems to be the problem? Master?"

It was an unfamiliar voice.
It had a polite tone that was unfamiliar as well.

If it was Lily, it would be more straightforward, if it was Kato, she would not call me ‘Master’.

In the first place, Lily has to go out for hunting for our interrupted food supply, Kato, who has no physical strength and tires out easily in the day, often dozes in the cave.

So, there should not be anyone who can talk to me.

No, there is another person in this cave who is my comrade.

But, she should not be able to speak.

That should be the case.

Though that should be the case... ...

I raised my face that had been covered by the towel.

"What seems to be the problem, Master?"

Rose is, somehow, talking.

"Rose...?"

"Yes. I am Rose. Master is the one who bestowed this name upon me."

I took approximately ten seconds to accept the reality of this situation.

Because whether or not I was upset, it was necessary.

"Rose? Really? Are you the one who is talking?"

"Yes. My wish to talk to Master has been granted at last. I am honored to do so."

It doesn't seem to be a mistake.

For a moment, I suspected if it was a type of ventriloquism.

But, no matter how I see it, it doesn't seem to be a prank. In the first place, based on Rose's personality, it is unlikely that she would help someone to play a trick on me.

"I never thought you would be able to speak."

Even when it has been accepted as reality, it is still hard to believe.

Although there was certainly a memory when that subject was discussed in the past.

"To become able to speak so easily... ..."

Even though it should be considerably difficult.

... ... No, it shouldn’t be the case?

If you think about it, even Lily, who took on the shape of a human, was able to talk immediately.

Through my link with Rose, I know that she has corresponding intelligence. In addition, from the fact that she is able to completely follow my instructions, I also know that she is able to understand my language.

In other words, the initial reason why the girls in my family couldn’t speak; rather than having insufficient intelligence to converse, was because they did not have the vocal functions to do so.

Grasping the abilities of being a monster, if they were able to cause vibrations in the air, they can converse with me. It has always been possible that way.

And Rose’s ability, without a doubt, is none other than the ability to create the magic tools.
In addition, I have previously even seen her manufacture her own arm.

If you know that as well, the answer will appear naturally.

"Did you rebuild your body?"

"A wise discernment."

Indeed, recently, I had thought that she seemed to be building something.

I thought that it was definitely the mass-produced spare parts of her limbs, but she seems to have created her own vocal organs.

Even if you inserted vocal tracts, the vocal organs that of a human should be completely different of others. Rose’s face was originally featureless and egg-shaped, not having appropriate organs such as the mouth.

If you look closely, the area around Rose’s throat appears to be thicker. The vocal organs should be embedded there.

"I didn’t think you could actually speak. How do I say this, I’m bad at praise but... ... Amazing."

"It is not that big of an accomplishment."

Perhaps she wanted to match the name that I gave to her, her voice was feminine.

It was a slightly lower tone of voice than normal women, but perfect for Rose’s image.

It’s very comforting to listen to.

"Just the rebuilding of a body, it is something not just anyone can easily do compared to Lily. Rather, it would be embarrassing to do so."

"I would not think so."

My words are from my true feelings, but Rose shook her head.

Anyhow, she seems to have low self-evaluation.

Later, I discreetly discovered that Rose thought of and adored Lily like an elder sister.

Certainly, she became my family before Lily did, it is not a mistake but...

There was an indescribable feeling.

Well, I'll get used to it after some time.

"Master"

While I was thinking about useless things, Rose continued calling me.

"What?"

"Please change your clothing. Would you like me to cleanse the body as well? I have asked elder sister Lily, and preparation of water has been completed."

"Oh. Is that so."

Due to the shock I received from Rose speaking to me, I had forgotten about that completely.

I took off the wet clothes soaked with sweat as prompted.

"The change of clothes are also available."

"Prepared before as usual, great."

"Please excuse me."
"It's refreshing to receive a reply here."

The water-filled bathtub, was something that Rose was made herself from wood and vines.

I am really indebted to Rose for taking care of me, yet there is nothing I can do in return, this feeling is really terrible.

I wet the towel with water and scrubbed the dirt off my body, slowly pouring the remaining water over my head to wash my hair.

I was pretty clean now.

Regrettably, it was not as refreshing as I would have felt after a bath in the previous world, though I had not expected it in this world either, I still hoped.

Sometimes I miss soap and shampoo as well.

Since I do not know how we can make it, it is a shame that I could not ask Rose to manufacture it.

Even if it was Rose, without knowing the raw materials nor the manufacturing process, it would be impossible to recreate it.

..... It’s impossible right?

It would be scary if Rose was able to though.

Next time, let’s request for more things.

While thinking of such things, I wiped my body with large towel that was passed to me and pushed my hand through the sleeve of the jersey that had been prepared.

Almost at the same time, Rose finished washing the school uniforms that I wore.
She went to hang it at the same area the washed clothes were placed near the entrance.
As I was warming my body by the bonfire, Rose knelt down on a knee beside me.
It seems that she had something on her mind.

I divulged a wry smile.
"Looks like you want to say something."
After directing water to flow away from this direction, Rose placed her hand on the chest stiffly.
"Master is insightful indeed."

"What, just say it out."
"Do you have to be something that you are worrying about?"
"That straightforward, huh."

My wry smile deepened.
Rose bowed her head again.

“I am deeply sorry.“
"No. I wasn’t really unhappy."

Rather because of her honest personality that was much like herself, I felt like smiling even more.

"I’ll ask just to be sure, why did you think so?"
"When Master had a nightmare, it was the first time it has happened as far as I know. Also, that incident occurred with someone who was once your schoolmate, with such a timing of events, the relationship of those factors would lead to... "
"Yeah, that’s true."

Looks like I’m also a simpleton.
I can’t laugh at Kaga anymore.

"May I have permission to further my question?"
"Ah. I don’t have any intentions to keep any secrets from you guys, you know."

Rose cordially returned her lips to their original positions while waiting to receive permission.
She asked in a terribly serious voice.

"Master, do you regret terminating your schoolmate with your own hands?"
"That’s not true."

Towards the question that Rose raised directly, I answered directly in a flat tone of voice.
I do not regret it.

There is still Lily and Rose for me.
Even Kato, whom I had promised to protect, is here with me.

A person like him that was weak against temptations, could not be afforded to be let into the inner circle.

"To begin with, the other side had been trying to kill me first. I'm not such a good-natured man to let that slide."

I am not a saint.
Just a seventeen-year-old student who can be found anywhere.

It's not possible to do such a good deed in the first place, if more can be said about it, it is only be thought of as mere foolishness.

Rather, if that man had survived this predicament, the fool would only produce more victims such as Miho and Mizushima Kato.
In that sense, it might even be considered that I did a rather good deed.
... ...That's said, it would be counted as something like excessive self-defense.
However, it is a fact that there is actually such a side of reasoning.

"In that case, what has troubled Master's thoughts so?"

Rose seems to be convinced that I had regrets over the fact that I had killed Kaga.

"Troubling worries... ... I'm not having such serious thoughts."

Rose exaggerates too much.
Because she was willing to consider such matters seriously for my sake, I felt moved by the huge magnitude of her emotions.

"Do you want to know?"
"If Master is comfortable with disclosing it."
"Listen up then."
She, who is seriously thinking about me, I want her to know.
Those were my honest thoughts.

"I can not believe in humans. It doesn't matter who the other party is. I can think both are. I am aware of my distorted view of humanity. I think that it's a good thing. At least, there will not be a possibility that I would be fooled by others. The fact that I will not be fooled means that I would not be subjected to untowards intentions of others or drawn into inadvertently dangerous situations.
"Master, you are a respectable man."
"I wonder about that. In this regard, I can only say that I have become timid."
I am aware of that, at least.
I'm being hard-pressed, but I'm not as strong as someone who can still believe in others or laugh in this situation.
"I, in accordance with my beliefs, doubted Kaga and eliminated the assumed risk that was associated with being with him. It might be a wild guess but it is not possible that Kaga had been working with cheat ability users... ... But from the information we gathered on the Colony, we also obtained information about dangers we have never imagined until now."
"Just like that previous case of dismembered bodies."

Already, I have told Rose and the others about the information that I know of.
Rose gave a good guess and understood what I wanted to say.

"Kaga was a simple-minded man. We can't help that his behavior was within the scope of our expectations. The thought of, 'we should have came up with a countermeasure no matter what', cannot be guaranteed."

"That's to say?"

"I am quite convinced that that guy would have betrayed us."

That's why the events that occurred today, from the beginning, everything was within expectations.

There was nothing uncertain about it.

However..... No, exactly because of that. I was reminded of it yet again.

"I've done what I had to do. That's why I'm not regretting anything..... However, if it's whether I felt nothing about it, well, it isn't exactly like that either."

I hate humans.
——However, I'll at least feel relieved if someone who studied together with me, is still breathing and alive.

I don't trust humans.

——However, for example, even if I was betrayed by it's betrayal by someone I don't trust, I will still feel hurt by it to a certain degree.

I will not hesitate in order to protect the well being of myself and my comrades.
——However, it just means that I'm resolved to ignore my own hesitation.

I have resolved myself to do it, without any hesitation, without feeling anything, would be the ideal way to go. For instance, even if it is the forbidden act of murdering another person.

I was barely able to accomplish doing it without any hesitation, but it was impossible to avoid murder.

Even if the other party was filth, that tried to kill me in order to get a girl, even though he tried to harm his former classmate, I still felt something, even when I didn't want to.

The only ones who would probably feel nothing from that are, a 『hero』 and a 『monster』.

As the 'Master' of 'Monsters' such as Lily and Rose, I should be one of those in the first place.

However, I am neither a hero, nor a monster.

For a kid like me, who's only seventeen years old, no matter what, I can't become that strong.

"........I don't understand."

Rose who listened to my story, suddenly expressed that she didn't understand.

"I see."

I did not become discouraged.
However, I thought that it couldn't be helped.

"Master is not mistaken."

Within Rose's tone, a little bit of stubbornness could be recognized.

"At least, master should know, that there were no other options available."
"I guess. I think I don't have to feel ashamed about anything."
"..... Even so, is it still no good?"

I quietly shook my head.

As long as I don't discard my human heart, I can never stop feeling.

"This is not just a 'What if' situation, but the me who can't trust any humans, maybe it is only natural that I lose trust in the hearts of men.
Perhaps I was meant to be a monster.

If that was the case, I wouldn't have had it this easy.

The reason I didn't end up like that is, ironically, because I met Lily who is a monster.
Because I met her, I was saved.

But if you look at it from another point of view.....
Because I was saved by Lily, I may have lost the opportunity to discard my human heart.

.....I wonder what Rose thinks about this appearance of mine.

As her master, as my kin, I wonder how she feels about my plight as her master.

She may end up getting tired of it.

I don't think she'll abandon me but..... Actually, I don't even want to think about it, but it may be bad to continue without asking any advice.

Well, by thinking like that, I might have made light of the determination of these girls.

"I apologize, master."

It was something that happened suddenly.

It was so sudden, that I was blankly staring for a moment.

Together with her apology, Rose put both of her hands on the ground and lowered her head.

"..... Rose why are you apologising?"

I really didn't know the reason.

This scene is, the place where I show my pathetic side.
I, as the master who couldn't live up to the expectations of his kin, should be the one apologizing, and Rose should be the one to forgive me.

Yet, the fact is, that Rose is the one lowering her head right now.

"I cannot understand master's thing, which is called the subtleness of human emotion. The me from right now cannot give salvation to master's heart."

Rose's tone of voice was kept calm, but there was a slight feeling of helplessness around it.

"I exist in order to protect master, for that purpose, I do not mind if this body has to turn into chips of wood."

The things that Rose wanted to say, even if the true meaning from her words aren’t transmitted one by one, the sincerity of her serious words were still passed on.

Having monsters for family.
Responding to my orders, existences with the sole purpose to fulfill orders.

Her loyalty is the real thing.
Because of that, she might get a sense of helplessness from time to time from that loyalty.

"The thing I can do is, just protecting master's body from harm and nothing more. I, am not able to protect master's heart. Furthermore, even though that's Lily-sama's role, I find myself pathetic. If the one standing here was Lily-sama, she could've comforted master....."

"Hey, just what are you saying. As if that's true! It isn't like that at all!"

Because Rose made a huge misunderstanding.

"For Rose to think that she did not save my heart, as if I'd allow such a misunderstanding!"

After I was saved by Lily, I had already decided to throw away my humanity.

Certainly, if I had really thrown away the human heart, I would not feel anything regarding the incidents involving Kaga's betrayal and subsequent events.
I might not have gotten that nightmare either.

However, because of that, I have never regretted what I have become.

From now on, I might not be able to hesitate with making decisions anymore.

Even if the opponent is someone I was once friends with, if they've turned into enemy even once, I'll have the determination to fight.

The reason I can stay like this, is truly because Lily and Rose devote themselves to me.

It doesn't matter if she can't comfort me with words.
She has, with her actions, always supported me in a different way.

That's why.
The misunderstanding Rose is having, is something that has to be resolved right now.

"Rose."

I clenched the hand Rose had dropped to the ground.

"Master?"

"Come this way, Rose"

I tightly hold her hand.

For a slight moment I really thought she was against it, but Rose obediently entrusted her body to me and followed.

I hugged Rose's simple spherical head.
It's hard but it had a nice warm feeling within my arms.

More than anything I felt Rose's presence the closest.

"Master....?"

From her chest, I could feel her sudden confusion pass through the connection.

Just for once, I want to transmit this strong sense of relief that I am feeling right now, just as strongly, to her.

"Rose, you have pledged yourself to me."

"That is so, however I am....."

"It's fine if you can't comfort me. However, just staying near me is more than enough."

I like to believe, that my true feelings without any lies are being transmitted.

Even when those girls think, that no matter how grateful they are, it's still not enough.

.....In the end, I can only smile wryly with the actions I'm taking.

"I'm sorry, but can you let me stay like this for a while?"

At this rate, whether I'm here in order to convince her, or whether I'm here in order to feel safe, I don't know which one.
Even when I’m thinking like that, I’m not planning to let go of her hand.

"Only if, you don't dislike it."
"Impossible. Something like disliking it. Something like that, is absolutely impossible."

Slowly her wooden arm reaches for my back.
It's just a shy way to return my hug.

".....Rather, I'm so happy I'm getting scared."
"I see."

As I lean closer to Rose I close my eyes.

As we stay like that for a while, suddenly my consciousness began to fade.
Sleepiness rapidly consumed my tired body and mind.

Getting sleepy because I'm relieved may seem childish but..... At this point, falling asleep in front of Rose.. I guess I don't have another choice.

I let go of my consciousness.

It looks like I won't see a nightmare this time.

AUTHOR’S Notes

◆ Happy New Year. I place myself in your care again this year.
The first one-shot of the New Year was the the story of hugging a doll.
◆ With respects to the situation between Kaga and the hero.

… Or so you thought, it was actually Rose’s turn this time.
◆ Rose is actually hiding her strength!
She would finally show her true powers from the second chapter onwards.
For now, she’ll remain cute. Because she is still a wooden doll... ...
◆ By the way, just after writing the first volume, it turned out to be a little over one hundred and twenty thousand words long (about twice than what’s up here).
Before submitting it, revision and modification is needed, there should be some changes.
◆ The next update will be on 1 / 4 (Saturday)

12. ‘Kaibutsu’

◆ Synopsis of the previous chapter:
The embrace of the Hero and Rose——
——While Lily was out hunting.
“Hah!? Just now, wasn't something important overlooked!?”

Chapter 12

The next day, at dawn.

“Morning, Master~“
“...’Morning.”

In the end, I fell asleep yesterday while embracing Rose. Snuggling against her chest, I woke up to see Lily’s strangely happy smile.

Apparently she was in good spirits because her imouto-bun and I were getting along.
<TL Note: imouto-bun = little sister, btw bun is pronounced ‘bhun’ - Blesserz>

Even though I felt off when hearing the term ‘Lily-anesama’ from Rose, she might actually be an unexpectedly good onee-san.
<TL note: Onee-san/anesama = elder sister, anesama is more formal>

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“Changing the headquarters? Why?”

I started talking after finishing breakfast. Lily’s black eyes sparkled as she tightly clung onto my arm; as if saying that it belongs to her.

“Is it because of… …the conversation with that senior yesterday?”

Unlike Lily, Kato-san seemed to understand what I wanted to say immediately. Rose had been the only one that had already heard the conversation, but seeming as if she didn’t want to join the upcoming discussion, she continued carving wood today as well.

Returning a nod to Kato-san, I started explaining to Lily.

“If what Kaga told us yesterday was true, there’s the possibility of a powerful monster in this area that’s even capable of killing a cheat ability user. So, staying here is dangerous.”

“Ah, I see. For example, there was also that story that one of the five mutilated and dismembered bodies was a member from the Scouting Corps…… But is that true? I still can’t believe it.”

"There's no way I’d believe that."

I shrugged.

“It’s just that, I don’t dare to take the risk.”

I replied to Lily, who was not convinced. I had already judged that Kaga had been telling the truth about the bodies.

For example, the other topic that Kaga mentioned——“I know the exploring plan of the Expedition Force”, that was a lie, just to attract my interest.

Instead, the subject about ‘finding five dismembered bodies, of which one of them was a cheat ability user, there was no benefit for Kaga to lie about it.

There was no reason to lie. Kaga was a fool devoted to his own desires. However, he was not a man that bragged about meaningless things that would not benefit him.

First of all, it’s fine to assume that one of those five people was a cheat ability user from the Scouting Corps.

Even a common warrior is at a level of strength that they can defeat most of the monsters in this forest.

If there was a monster like that, that lived in such a place, one would want to leave as fast as possible.

“Even so, for something to exist that is capable of killing cheat ability users…”

I can’t believe it… ...But even if I don’t want to, it’s a fact.

They might have been surrounded by many monsters, but there were no other corpses in that vicinity. Therefore, it was reasonable to think that it was just a single creature that had massacred them one-sidedly.

“Is it really that weird?”

“Doesn't Lily think that it’s weird? The cheat ability users that came to this world can kill a dragon with their bare hands. For a monster to kill them so easily is unimaginable to me.”

“And yet, monsters are also divided into different ranks.”

“Ranks?”

“Yes.”

Lily rubbed her cheek against my arm while nodding.

“What do you mean?”

“Hmm…”

Lily made a show of considering it for a moment before opening her mouth.

“You know that those existences the students that were transferred to this world call monsters, are living beings that possess magic power, right?”

“Right…”

“Basically, the more magic power the monsters have, the more powerful they are.”

That I understand. For example, in an extreme case: 'A big bear without magic power absolutely cannot win against a mouse that has magic'.

“Also, the average magic power of a monster is proportional to the magical power of the land it lives in.”

“Wait a minute. What do you mean by the land’s magical power?”

“Nn? Ah, that’s right, Master can’t sense magic.”

Just when I wanted to complain that it was common sense not to be able to do so, Lily stuck out her red tongue and waggled it at me.

"Magic, is something that originates from the earth. It moves along with the flow of the air. It seeps into the land along with the rain, and takes root in the ground. And those that absorb and concentrate it in their bodies, are us monsters."

"Eh... To put it simply, it would be like a factory that takes in raw metals and processes it, flushing out harmful substances as industrial waste?"

"...That’s right but, I really don’t want to agree to that. ...Even though it’s theoretically correct..."

Lily made a disagreeable expression with her face; perhaps the image produced by the example was too unpleasant.

Well, the imagery is certainly the worst one could think of, but I believe it made the

phenomenon easier to understand.
Initially heavy metals dissolve in water, plankton absorb those metals, then small fish eat those plankton, which in turn are preyed upon by bigger fish… ...These harmful materials are passed along the food chain until humans eventually consume them.

“Even if it’s a tiny amount, the small animals and plants in this forest also contain magic in them. And of course, magic is also in the air. It is gathered by and gets stored in the bodies of monsters. So, to be precise, monsters should be defined as ‘living creatures that can accumulate magic’. Because magic can be absorbed from the land, of course, if the land is rich in magic as well, the monsters living in it would come to absorb more magic."

"You seem to be knowledgeable on the subject..."

"That’s because, well, it’s something to do with our biology."

"Biology?"

“Yes.”

Lily nodded.

“By accumulating magic above a certain point… ...I mean, a portion of monsters have the capacity to store magic power within themselves, and after living for a long time, they become able to perform reproductive activities on a regular basis. In simple words, they become capable of producing children.”

“...I see.”

What is this, I wonder.

When a cute girl like Lily says something like ‘reproductive activities’, I start to feel a strange feeling bubbling inside.

I know this is a serious talk, but still...

“I wonder if it’s asexual reproduction? Ah, but then monsters that are born this way have varying magic capacities, I wonder what’s different about them. Sorry, I don’t understand the details of that matter very well. Anyway, Slimes like me and Magical Puppets like Rose should be from these types. But, I don’t know about monsters like the Fire Fangs.”

“So that means that in order to maintain the balance of the magic in the land, the population of monsters with large magic capacities won’t increase?”

“Yes. That’s why the power of the monsters is dependent on the amount of magical power in the land. However, this is only applicable to normal monsters.”

“Normal monsters?”

In other words, there are also abnormal monsters.

“To clear it up by using Mizushima Miho’s knowledge in games… Regarding the ordinary monsters’ reproductive abilities… For example, those that can do that have a kind of 'Queen Monster' feeling to them, I guess?”

“Of course, they’re stronger than most ordinary monsters aren’t they.”

“Considerably so. However, each time they perform reproduction activities, they lose a certain amount of magic, so their power levels are variable at times. So, next, a monster such as me is, hmm, I guess I would be called a ‘Unique Monster’.”

“Unique, in other words, there is only one of them?”

“Kind of. They are ‘irregulars’ born from asexual reproduction… …Or so called mutations, I guess. Well, you can think of them as a kind of unique beings. However, it’s not like they are strong just because they’re a ‘Unique Monster’. In my case, I’m only unique among the Slimes.”

Certainly, Lily did not originally have high combat abilities.

However, the mimicry ability that she holds is indeed, one of a kind. Therefore, being called a ‘Unique Monster’ is fitting for her.

“Then, Rose would have a ‘Rare Monster’ kind of feeling.”

“What? Rose wasn’t an ordinary monster?”

Taken by surprise, I involuntarily turned towards Rose.

She bowed to me modestly.

“Rose is stronger than an ordinary Magical Puppet. Don’t you feel so?”

“Now that you’ve said it, I’ve often felt impressed with Rose’s capabilities in the past.”

“When compared to the excellence of Lily-anesama, it is akin to a miscalculation instead.”
<Editor note: Rose is saying her strength is erroneous.>

Rose interjected, but I disagree with her.

Lily also laughed a little before continuing the conversation while looking at her imouto-bun with a troubled expression.

“Also, ranked among the ‘Rare Monsters’… ...Let's see, there are those that are called ‘High Monsters’ I guess.”

“In what way are they different from ‘Rare Monsters’?”

“Everything.”

Lily declared with a flat voice.

“I feel bad for Rose but, the ‘Rare Monsters’ that I was talking about, only means that, within the same race, they are more excellent than the others, and nothing more.
In comparison, I can unashamedly say that I am a scarce ‘Rare’; one born among thousands. For example, one day I can even become a Queen... ...However, ‘High Monsters’ are existences on a totally different level.”

Lily had a face so serious, it was scary.

“They exist outside the ecosystem. They are something akin to a ‘Queen Monster’, but they don't perform reproductive activities. I wonder if they can exceed their limits in accumulating magic.”

“The magic capacity of a monster determines its strength, right?”

“Yes; that’s why we absolutely cannot compete against them. Fighting is useless; if you try to fight them, you’ll face certain death. You'd have to be lucky just to escape from them. For example, in the past, I saw a single individual annihilate a herd of close to a hundred Fire

Fangs. That was, surely, a ‘Kaibutsu.”
<TL note: Kaibutsu means ‘monster’ here, from now on, when ‘kaibutsu’ is used, it means “A monster among monsters.” It can be translated as “Eccentric Monster” too. -Tensaiz & Blesserz>

“A monster among monsters, huh…”

Thinking of fighting against a guy like that sent chills down my spine.

It’s natural to run immediately if you were discovered by it. As I thought, it'd be better to change the location of the headquarters so that we won't have to meet with anything that dangerous.

While I was deciding on a plan on how to move forward from now on, I suddenly noticed something.

“Hey, Lily.”

“Yes?”

“The thing you call a ‘High Monster’. Could it possibly kill a cheat ability user?”

“...Right. That might be possible.”

She replied uncertainly.

“It depends on the situation, but if they fought head to head in a direct battle, I think it would be a hard battle.”

“...It’d be difficult?”

“Yes.”

At Lily’s reply, unable to find anything to say, I sighed.

How overpowered can a cheat ability user be?

Still, human beings are the terrifying ones.

“However, there might be monsters that are even more powerful than those that I know of. I was only a Slime, and could only live in a limited area. Perhaps Rose would know more.”

“No; I did not see any ‘Unique Monsters’, other than anesama, nor ‘Rare Monsters’, aside from myself, either.”

According to these two, the possibility of finding a ‘Rare Monster’ seems to be rather low.

But we must take careful measures to be safe. It would be too late to regret dying, when in hell.

“Anyway, we should get as far away as we can, as soon as we can, from anywhere those monsters might appear. But I feel bad for Kato-san.”

As I summarized my story, at the end, I sent one last look at Kato-san.

If Kato-san waits here, there's a high possibility of meeting the Scouting Corps passing by.

However, if we leave, we would have just returned back to square one.

I looked towards the water; Kato-san was quietly looking down while stroking the braids on her shoulder with her fingers.

She didn’t look very discouraged by it.

Perhaps, I should say she looked emotionless, like usual.

She looks to have recovered quite a bit, but she was still far from normal. In the first place, something like the recovery of mental conditions is pretty vague.

It would be good if there was something to celebrate about for a change of pace, but I don’t have something like that.

“I have… ...no particular problems with that.”

“I see. In that case, let’s hurry and leave this place.”

Since we made the decision quickly, this makes things easier.

We started to pack our belongings immediately.

The weapons created by Rose so far were; three swords, two spears, and two axs. After that, there were shields, breastplates, and protection for the lower body.

Lily was using a spear as her main weapon and a sword as her secondary weapon.

Rose had a battle ax in one hand and carried a spare on her shoulder.

I had a sword on my waist, carried another on my back and equipped a large shield.

A breastplate and a small shield, that would not be a hindrance in battle, were distributed to everyone. I had the same equipment as the others, except that I was equipped with a large shield instead.

Actually, I wanted to give Kato-san, who had the same battle prowess as me, a large shield to act as a wall for her. But no matter how light we made it, her physical strength was insufficient to wield it, so I didn't have another made for her.

Other than these weapons and armors, there were various other daily necessities and useful goods that I had requested Rose to make. However, I decided to throw them away because they were too inconvenient to carry about.

I made the decision that we would make them again when needed. This might create more work for Rose, but she didn’t seem to particularly care about it.

We looted the goods from Kaga’s backpack. The clothing was stuffed into Kato-san’s handbag, the food (smoked meat and the like) were wrapped in some tanned skin from the

Fire Fangs by the four sides and tied up, with the same going for Rose's spare parts.

"Did anyone forget anything? ——Okay, let's set off."

And so, we left behind the cave we had gotten used to living in.

* * *

Tree branches bent, slamming onto the ground.

A blow as sharp as a whip, it was filled with enough power to gorge a large hole in the ground.

If a car was somehow hit by that, it would have been destroyed. If I got hit by that, I would become a stain on the ground.

The one that was able to dodge such a blow which made one's blood run cold, an attack that boasts of great destructive power, at the very last moment, was just a single wooden doll…

...It was Rose.

"Shiiii~~~~!"

As soon as Rose landed, she lunged forwards with a piercing battle cry, In front of her stood a large, majestic monster called a 'Treant'.

That appearance, described in two words, would be a 'walking tree'.

When Lily was in her Slime form she had been quite big as well, but the Treant towered over her at four meters tall.

Mowing down the surrounding trees as it approached, an entire house could be destroyed by its power.

However, Rose did not show any hesitation towards such a gigantic enemy.

She cut off the branches that attacked her from the left and right with an ax on one hand, and used the other to avoid——

“!?”

——Branches that appeared from below her, chased after her like a snake.

Just in the nick of time, Rose repelled it with the buckler in her other hand.

She successfully defended herself, but she lost her footing and stance.

The Treant immediately tried to pursue its attack, moving the countless roots that were its feet.

“Anesama!”

“I know!”

While Rose was distracting him, Lily had finished her preparations for a large attack magic. Behind her back, her hands began to shine.

Third-ranked wind magic was compressed into the form of a bullet with power that was comparable to a large rifle with overwhelming power.

——Then, *creeeaaak*.

A sharp sound that grated on one’s eardrums rang out and a part of the Treant exploded.

“Giii!?”

The hole that was made was larger than what two adults combined could reach even with their arms stretched out; nearly cutting the tree in half. I could clearly see the foliage that was in the background through it on the other side.

As expected of the Treant, it was still alive even after that attack. However, it didn't escape unscathed and both its arms had stopped attacking.

Without missing that chance, Rose swung her battle ax in a large arc.

“Shiiiiing——!”

She dealt the finishing blow by using the big hole that Lily already opened in the Treant.

Instead of a cry of agony in its death throes, the Treant let out a creak as its body was cut in half magnificently, falling to the ground at last.

* * *

"I think we're starting to get used to fighting together."

I murmured calmly.

I push aside the branches that came close to my head. Rose was leading the way and opening up a path. But due to her small stature, there are some branches that occasionally get in the way as I walk.

“It was such an awful first battle, right? I was prepared to die there.”

Lily, who was walking next to me, responded to me talking to myself.

“Me too. My heart stopped, especially when Rose appeared.”

“I am deeply sorry. I had been surprised at that time as well.”

“No. After all, I survived thanks to you. Good job with today’s battle as well.”

“I am grateful for your praise.”

“Lily as well…”

“Ahaha. That’s because I had it easy.”

“What are you talking about? If Lily-anesama had not been there, I would not have been able to fight as the vanguard with such confidence. That role is more than I could handle by myself.”

After the encounter with the Treant, we continued our progress through the forest again.

We were generally heading in the direction of where the sun rises.

Now, we were conveniently moving eastwards.

More specifically, in the opposite direction of the Colony.

...Or so it is supposed to be. I think.

The forest scenery is quite indistinguishable for an urban guy like me, so I can’t really tell, but we should be moving away from it.

I can’t rely on my sense of direction, though there shouldn’t be an issue since I asked Rose to lead the way.

Even within this forest where the sky couldn't be seen most of the time, you can sometimes see the rising and falling outlines of the mountains in the far distance; including one splendidly large… …figure that looked just like Mt. Fuji. The First Expedition Unit to set off seemingly used it as a landmark.

This was information from Kato-san. To be precise, it was what Takaya had told her.

Moving in the same direction as them means that we were moving away from the Colony. In other words, in the direction away from the vicinity of that cave.

Five days have already passed by since we left that cave.

It feels as if we've travelled a considerable distance on foot.

Of course, that's only true if we haven't gone around in circles.

For us human beings, normally we would not have been able to traverse a forest like this as easily as we did now. It was only because Lily and Rose whom had incomparable strength and stamina were clearing the way for us, that we were able to do it so easily.

Kato-san did a good job despite having the lowest physical abilities amongst us. Actually, since she tended to overdo things, we had to pay extra attention to her instead.

Although we were uneasy camping in the wild, we never got attacked while sleeping.

Also, even if we did get attacked, Lily and Rose, who didn't need any sleep, were properly on the lookout. It became the norm for me to sleep while hugging Lily, as Kato-san slept near Rose, who crafts her spare limbs silently.

"Let's stop here for today."

Night falls early in the forest.

We humans who do not have night vision and were uncertain of our feet when it became dim, had a much higher risk of causing or being involved in an accident.

Just like we did for the past few days, we made camp while it was still bright.

When finding a suitable place for camping, first of all, Lily goes back to her Slime form and melts the plants that are short, before consuming them.

Like this, some space is cleared in the forest, after which, Rose starts making a bonfire.

Even though there's a great risk of being discovered when starting a bonfire, I decided to do it since the risk of having zero visibility for us humans was more dangerous.

Of course, I'm careful to choose a location that prevents light from escaping too much. The obstacles in the forest are very useful in times like these.

Because I lent a hand in helping out, we had our meal without having to wait for too long.

We sat in a circle around the crackling bonfire.

This was the norm whenever we ate.

By the way, the trees that Rose cut down burn very well. Normally, a living tree is hard to set fire to, but it got set ablaze easily. I guess it's the power of magic.

"Well then, even though we have reached here safely thus far… …Let's proceed without letting down our guard."

"That's right. In fact, I think the real thing starts from now on."

I returned a nod to Lily who agreed with me.

"It wouldn't be strange if we had left the range of operations of the Scouting Corps by now. The number of monsters will gradually increase from here on out."

So far, we had only encountered individual monsters. But that was only because the Scouting Corps had hunted around the area, dramatically reducing their numbers.

We were travelling in the same direction as the First Expedition Unit as they were disposing of most of the monsters, since there would be less of them populating this area even if just by a little bit… ...Well, that was one of the meagre expectations we had when we headed this way.

The other one is, of course, to let them take custody of Kato-san. It would be good if she could successfully join up with them.

“If there was a dangerous monster around that cave, the question would be, how far it would take for us to be, before we are at a safe distance away from it.”

“We have progressed more smoothly than we expected. It would be great to find a place where we could rest about now.”

“Are we still going after the Expedition Unit, even after we leave the forest?”

“If that's possible, that would be great. The problem is, wouldn't that be hard to actually do so?”

Also, after travelling for days and days on end through this forest, with barely any changes in the scenery, rather than a sense of fatigue, I felt a heavy sense of futility.

I don’t know about monsters like Lily and Rose, but it’s pretty tough on us humans mentally.

Once you start to slacken emotionally, the dangers on the journey increases as well.
Of course, fatigue also piles up.

Even if we don't get attacked by monsters, a human only needs to miss his footing on a slope to die easily.

We have no choice but to be cautious.

“It has only been five days since we left the cave, but it might be the time to make a new base.”

“If that is what Master says, I will abide.”

“At least, after coming this far, we should get a little rest. To be honest, I’m feeling a little tired. I know I've been dragging you guys down. But I don’t want to commit a fatal mistake.”

While talking like this, we took a piece of smoked lizard monster meat that we’d packed for the journey, and re-grilled it in the bonfire.

I took one such lizard in my hand and bit into its head.

Oh yeah. There is also a problem regarding the food supply.

Ensuring a stable food supply is incredibly difficult while on the move. Monsters that attack us, such as the Fire Fangs, can be eaten, but Treants are inedible.

As I thought, we will have to collect food after settling down and then restore our strength by resting. I want to find a place like the previous cave we had stayed in as much as possible.

“Come to think of it…”

Kato-san, who was eating a lizard that was grilled to crispiness with both her hands, was the one who had suddenly opened her mouth.

She was basically a silent girl.

I don't know if she was like this from the start, or became like this after, but she had mostly been a listener to conversations between Lily and me.

Even after Rose was finally able to talk by creating vocal equipments for herself, her

personality is not very assertive, so it was more or less just Lily and me conversing throughout the journey.

“”What?””

It was so unusual for her to speak out that both Lily and I turned to look at her at the same time.

“Ah, that’s…”

Uncomfortable, Kato-san who remained wrapped in sheets like always, was in a sitting position while holding her knees to her chest, fidgeting with her knees.

“I was listening to the conversation about the future plans, but I was thinking, you know…”

“What?”

“Senpai… …have you not thought of returning to our world?”

That question was like a sudden grenade thrown my way.

Lily’s body that was cuddling besides me, trembled slightly.

Rose, who was wood crafting, turned to face me, slightly panicked.

Those reactions were easy to understand.

The topic was that important.

“I didn’t particularly think about it.”

However, my answer was very straightforward.

Kato-san opened her eyes widely in an unusual move for her, perhaps in surprise.

“Real… really…?”

“Yeah."

I tore off the limb of the lizard and chewed on it.

“Well, when I first came to this world, I was always thinking about when I can return; it was all I could think about.”

“In that case...”

“But now, I have these guys with me.”

I stroked Lily’s head that was next to me.

“...Master.”

Lily called me in an unusual voice that was full of restraint.

“We… If the Master wants to return…”

“Ah, no. That’s not it. My way of saying that was bad.”

Lily pulled on my arm, drawing me closer to her upper body while frowning.

“I just wanna be together with you guys.”

“Master…”

“In the first place, there is no meaning in hypothesizing. Whether or not to return, I will think about it after I have the means to do so. In present conditions, there are no clues on how, and before that, it takes all I have just to think about how to survive day-to-day. I don’t have the time to think about such things.”

It’s not like I don’t think about my brothers and parents that I had left behind.

I want to somehow tell them that I’m safe.

However, while that may be true, I don’t want to be separated from the important things that I have here.

In any case, I want to take these girls with me when I return.

Although it’s quite a dilemma if you thought hard about it, fortunately, the current situation is not a ‘what if’ talk.

Rather than thinking about the possibilities of being able to return or not, thinking about how to survive in this world takes a higher priority.

However, even if you accept staying in this world, just by living in such a dangerous forest like this, another problem arises.

To put it frankly, a limit will eventually appear.

You could lose your life from monster attacks, but the issue of food supply is a serious problem as well. Recently, I started thinking about the nutritional values of the food that we’ve barely been getting. We have also been eating small fruits that the Colony had confirmed were edible, but I suppose they lack vitamins.

We could become sick if we continue to live like this for a long time… …This was the problem that Lily, who possessed Mizushima Miho's knowledge, raised.

I’m not familiar with these kind of things, but scurvy could be an extreme example of how serious this situation could be.

I’m someone who can subdue monsters. I don’t know how the humans from this world would react to that, but once we’ve stepped out of this forest there is a possibility that it will become necessary to step into civilization.

I don’t know what will happen then, or if that time will even arrive.

Sometimes I get uneasy.
I wonder if there is a safe haven for us.

“Master.”

At that time.
Rose, who has been silent so far, spoke in a low voice.

Simultaneously, Lily, who was leaning against me, raised her eyes.
A sniffing sound could be heard; she had acquired this ability when we defeated that Fire Fang the other day. She was gathering information about the surroundings.

“Be careful… ...We’ve been surrounded.”
“Understood.”

With Rose’s warning, I immediately shifted my back and took the big shield in my hand. We always wear protective equipment, even while sleeping, in preparation for times like these. And so, we’re battle-ready.

Lily pulled her spear towards herself in one hand and began preparations for the deployment of magic circles with the other, then Kato-san came dashing to my side. This was our usual routine.

Several seconds after we had finished our battle preparations...

“Grrrrr…”

What came from the depths of the forest, were two Fire Fangs.

“No. There’s one more.”

With an attitude of vigilance, Rose stood alert with her faceless head pointed towards the opposite direction of the two Fire Fangs.

She said that we were surrounded. Just as she predicted, another Fire Fang that had been lurking in the bushes appeared.

It seems to have judged their surprise attack a failure.

On the other hand, the wolves did not look like they were going to retreat.
That is, they judged that they will triumph against us.

“Three, huh? This looks problematic.”

We have never encountered this many of them at once.

We fought against Fire Fangs several times, but it was only ever against one of them at at a time.

There were… three of them now.

It was something that I had been expecting to occur one day, but even so, I can’t control the fear that surged within me as we were surrounded.

“Anyway, we have to finish one of them off quickly...”

Licking my lips that dried from the tension, I whispered as I held my gaze in front of me. The wolves started to slowly circle us in a clockwise direction.

They were looking for an opportunity.

The aim was… …shit. It was obvious what they were gunning after; Kato-san and I.
Perhaps their intuitions as wild wolf’s told them that the two of us were the weakest in the bunch.

If that's the case, this might get bad. To aim for the weakest part of a group is a classic battle strategy.

Unintentionally, I let out a gulping sound.

In this critical situation, even Lily and Rose might not pull through. Not to mention the two of us, who were just a liability...

“It's alright, Master.”

“Please be at ease, Master.”

Then, perhaps becoming aware of my uneasiness they called out to me unanimously.

“Because we will protect Master.”

“Even if I have to substitute my very body, I will ensure Master’s survival.”

Through the path between us, my unease was conveyed to those girls.

They called to me immediately to reassure me.

Then, I too, was connected to their hearts.

They have a solid resolution to protect me; an absolute resolve to do whatever it takes.

Their transmitted thoughts were washing away the fear and unease that had dominated my heart.

Instead, they gave me courage in order to confront this difficult fight.

“Lily, Rose…”

I clenched my fist tightly to stop my trembling and forcibly distorted the corners of my lips into a smile.

It was too awkward to call it a fearless smile, but it was the only way for me to show courage, in order to respond to the concerns of these girls.

“Don’t say stupid things. If we are to survive, we’re doing it together.”

“Yeah!”

“Acknowledged!”

It doesn’t matter who the opponent is, we won't lose.

I fervently believe this.

Because I believe so, that should give them power through the path that connects us. Through the path between us, they should get stronger from the faith I held in them.

“Lily will be responsible for one of them! Try to finish it off as soon as possible! Rose will protect us while trying to hold off the other two. Kato-san, do not leave my side!”

There was no reason to wait.

Since there are three opponents aiming for Kato-san and I, it's impossible for Lily and Rose to protect us against all of them at the same time.

First of all, Lily will use her full strength to beat one as fast as possible.

In the mean time, Rose, who is superior in combat, will focus on buying time.

After that, all I can do is to believe in those girls.

I can do that, because it’s the least I could do.

“Go!”

I issued the order.

A green glow was emitted from the magic circle that began forming in Lily’s hand, consequently, an explosion occurred.

Rose was our shield, she had no intention of retreating an inch.

"Roaaaaaarrrrrr!"

Seeming as though it wasn't aiming for the two of us at all, one of the wolves intercepted Lily while the other two continued running towards us with deliberate aim.

“Yaaah—!”

“Shiiii—!”

“Roaarrrrr!”

The 3 wolves clashed with Lily and Rose——

——Just before that happened.

Something white flashed across my vision.

"Grroarh?!"

One of the wolves that was heading our way had jumped into the air with its mouth open and filled with flames, but suddenly it fell with a strange posture.

The situation before me, was an unbelievable sight.

Something flew straight into the body of the wolf which was over two meters tall.
The wolf had not even realized what had happened to itself.

Just before being blown away into the trees that towered around the surroundings, the head of the wolf got shot by something with momentum akin to that of a bullet——*splatter*.

In the night, ominous ‘red flowers’ started falling, a giant tree absorbed the shock and fell to the ground, causing a tremor.

It was too abrupt.

No one was able to grasp what had just happened.

“Graaah…?”

In that moment, everyone was stunned in amazement by how the Fire Fang had been killed. The two other Fire Fangs that had been moving in our direction, seemed to notice something and looked up into the air.

Too late.

“Grooaah!?”

Something had fallen down and crushed the wolves as they screamed.

Then, there were no further movements.

“Wh-… ...what?”

I raised a groan while looking at what was in front of me——a pure white spider.

Furry white hair covered the entirety of the spider’s gigantic body.

Eight sharp claws can be seen on the ends of the spider’s legs, one of them must have skewered the cranium of the Fire Fang.

“This is… …it can’t be.”

With legs that were three meters long when stretched out, on the cephalothorax* of the large white spider, existed something that should not have been there.

<TL Note: Cephalothorax: basically, the fused part of the head and the main body of spiders in simple English, go google if you want details. -Blesserz>

It was the upper body of a young girl.

The girl who had flowing, long white hair that looked like spider silk, smiled devilishly in our direction.

> ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S NOTES<

◆In the beginning, while Rose was watching over the sleeping MC with a smile, Lily felt a slight sense of loneliness in her heart. ...Please imagine something similar to that yourself.

◆Next update will be on the 1/8 (Wednesday).

<TL note: LETS BVEAVE ZHE PHRASING EXACTLYz LIKE THAT(RANDOM TL),

PWEAZEEEE, VOUR ZOULS HAZ VEEN ZAKEN BY ZIS ***ENTIRE*** CHAPTER

(TEN**SAI**ZZ)> **SRLS,Y HOW CAN U GET YR NICK WRONG, I EVEN NEEDED TO EDIT THAT** HWHAHAHA

OUR AWESOMENESS IS UNSTOPPABLEZ!! WE ARE INVINCIBLEEEE! UNDEFEATABLZE! WE HAVE GAINED IMMORTALITY BY FINISHING THIS CHAPTER, THE SUFFERING HAS PAVED THE WAY, TOWARDS GREATNESS WE HAVE SOLVED THE DEATHLY HALLOWS!!!!!!

THIS SERIES IS HEREBY RENAMED:

<THE MOTHER OF MONSTROSITIES> ←----------!

ANY OBJECTIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITHIN 0.0000000000001 MS OF POSTING THIS CHAPTER, SUBMIT NOW OR FOREVER HOLD YOUR PEACE.

...

IT HAS BEEN DECIDED.

AND SO, THE NEW ERA HAS DAWNED UPON US

WE, ARE THE BANE OF OUR OWN WORKS

COFFEE MOVES OUR BODIES, AND SWEETS, OUR MINDS

SLEEP IS OUR ENEMY, AND TIREDNESS, OUR FOE

WE HAVE TRANSLATED OVER A MILLION TYPOES

UNKNOWN TO TIREDNESS, NOR KNOWN TO AWAKENESS

HAVE WITHSTOOD SLEEPLESS NIGHTS TO PROOFREAD MANY CHAPTERS

YET, THESE EYES WILL NEVER REST IN PEACE

SO AS WE PRAY, UNLIMITED LIGHT NOVELS!!!!!!!¡¡¡¡¡¡¡¡¡

->THUS OUR NEW PLEDGE IS CREATED, THE VOW HAS BEEN MADE<-

13. The Atrocities of the White Spider

Synopsis of the previous chapter:

“Now that you mention it… Lily, that is, um, do you have any experience in reproductive activities?”

“Hn? Like giving birth to a child? What is it, Master, are you interested?”

‘Before meeting me she was only a Slime, but, if you ask if I’m interested, I am interested though… What’s with this vague feeling.’

“Fufu. Not yet. I’m still a young individual.”

“I-Is that so.”

*It was scrapped from the middle of the story. Well, doesn’t that sound interesting.

Chapter 13.

The air was freezing.

What moved was the flickering fire from the bonfire, which produced shadows.

Our awareness was stiffened, it has been drawn by the sudden appearance of an intruder.

“Arachne…?”

From my mouth, the word unconsciously spilled out.

Arachne.

I knew about a monster with that name when I was at the Colony.

They said it is a giant spider monster with a woman growing on its upper body.

Well, in games, it's common for monsters to have the appearance of a half-human. However, in this parallel universe, between the monsters which appeared around the Colony, the Arachne is the only monster that is known to us to have that characteristic.

But, it is impossible that said Arachne can be mistaken for a human.

If anything, it is not only because of the ugly spider's lower body. 'The giant spider which grew 'a woman monster' on its upper body' is what can be expressed from the face that has been seen; rather, the problem lies with the woman that completely looks like a monster.

The mouth was a slit from ear to ear; two big fangs peeked out from the corners of its mouth.

The eyes are round and sunken, the pupils are bloodshot red.

The skin is hard with a thin covering of fur, in the terribly skinny body, the bones were angled at unnatural positions all throughout it.

Even in the state where the lower body is separated, the corpse of an Arachne will not be mistaken for a human's.

If the figure resembles a human, the people in the Scouting Corps might even hesitate to hunt it. This may even cause victims.

In fact, there was also a case like that in the past.

It's when the Scouting Corps which consists of the students with cheat ability was made. Even with such huge fighting power, they who have never experienced any actual battles, suffered many casualties as they fight monsters while exploring the forest.

There was once a student who died and became an undead monster in the process, the guys at that time, the students who couldn't kill the undead monster with the appearance of their friend, suffered more casualties in that disaster.

But, as for Arachnae, there was none as far as I've heard.

Instead, the human part is the one that stands out as more monster-like and disgustingly registered, said the students who are members of the Scouting Corps.

That is, the monster called Arachne that I knew.

But, the thing in front of my eyes, it is totally different from what I have heard.

The appearance of the pure white spider with a full grown woman's well clothed torso attached to its lower body does not give any impression of a monster. Rather than monstrous, its face resembled that of a young woman below her twenties, the only thing outstanding about it was the deep red eyes which looked as if they had coloured contacts in. Even so, there was no impression of her being a monster.

As though made from spider's silk, the thin, translucent, *chiffon-like fabric obscured her elegant body line. Luxurious and stylish, it was as if it was a product made to seduce men.
**(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiffon_(fabric))*

There's no room for discussion, she's a beautiful woman.

Even though she grew out from the spider, the truth is not overshadowed by it.

"Fufu…"

Her deep red lips let out a smile, her red pupils tried to inspect each of us, slowly moving to the left and right.

I instinctively realized it.

Looking for something, the sound of her footsteps approached.

…But, what is she looking for?

The moment I thought that, the alarming sound in my head since a while ago was one step ahead, the volume was increasing.

The crimson eyes caught my appearance. She squinted her eyes and looked at me.

"...Found thee."
<TL note: Yes, the White Arachne speaks in olden Japanese… So we're going with Shakesphere! In case you haven't realized -Blesserz>

After hearing the girl's clear voice, I got goosebumps.

Without any reason, I was convinced.

That is, we must not encounter her, and it’s the worst thing that could happen.

In other words, a ‘High Monster’.

The white spider in front of my eyes was not a regular one, it was a monster out of our reach.

“Run aw—…!”

My words weren't finished and got cut off, disappearing into nothingness.

“O, guh… Ooo!?”

The moment I realized my body’s right flank was hit by something, my body was pulled with a tremendous force.

Reflexively I tried to hold my ground, but my strength was no match for it.

My supposedly adult body was floating in mid air.

At the same time, a strange noise was produced from the heavy burden on the right half of my hanging body which made my hair stand on end.

“A, ga… …h?!”

A pain severe enough to make my vision flash.

“...kh, …!?”

There were no sounds.

Many things, were broken.

It hurts so much that I don't know where it hurts.

My consciousness was fleeting and barely connected, maybe caused by fear and a sense of crisis. I don't know for how long it lasted.

I dropped my line of sight to look at my body.

White sticky material was wrapping my body, from my arm to my chest.

It extends a distance——Now, it is attached to the Arachne's hand who was holding me.

——Spider's thread.

I'm now being pulled by said Arachne. It's the same as the Fire Fang which was killed earlier, right. If the Arachne feels like it, I can also become a deep red stain which spoils the forest.

And, the crisis hasn't left yet.

My life is in the hands of an evil monster.

Of course, my 'family' will not just stand and watch.

The first one to act after I was caught by the white spider was Rose. She was the closest one to me.

The distance between the Arachne who was pulling me, and I, was around 5 meters, a distance of this degree is nothing for Rose who is a monster.

When I saw her, she was running while swinging her axe.

“Release Mas——”

The next moment, Rose was advancing in front of me as though in slow motion.

“——kh!?"

Rose was blown off a few meters into the bushes, creating *baki baki* sounds as she hit them. I was dumbfounded by the sight of it.
*<TL note: *baki baki* = sharp breaking sounds>*

I was sure that something had happened, but I didn’t want to admit to the reality.

The White Arachne who is holding me had just stuck out one of her spider legs and moved forward.

With just that, Rose was blown off.

And I wasn’t even given a chance to worry about her who had just been done in.

I who was being held by the White Arachne which started to fiercely run off.

Since my body’s right side is injured and can’t move, my resistance didn’t seem like any resistance at all. No. Even if my body can move, resisting the person who managed to beat Rose with a single blow is useless.

The view of the burning bonfire inside the forest which was reflected in my eyes went black in an instant. At the same time, my consciousness had passed the limit of pain and finally got swallowed into the darkness.

“Masterrr—!”

The last thing that I saw was Lily’s hand which was directed to me, and a face which was going to cry.

It’s been about 1 hour since I lost my consciousness.

My bubble of consciousness, floating between dream and reality.

The feeling of cold woke me up.

I opened my eyes.

At that moment, I remembered what happened before I lost consciousness.

“This place is…!?”

My upper body rose with a snap, as though propelled by something.

As soon as I did that, I groaned as I felt the pain coming from my body’s right side.

"Ugu... Gah, haa... Gu, u, uuuh..."

I was somehow able to stabilize my breathing and then I checked my own body’s condition.

My mind was far away.

The remains of the shirt I wore on my body… …The right side was in a miserable state.

The outline of my wrist looks weird.

One of my fingers is also in a strange position.

My ribs—which I heard were easily breakable in general—were, naturally, hurting.

It seems I accidentally twisted my ankle. A dull aching could be felt.

While I had fainted, the worst of the pain had probably passed, fortunately for now, half of the pain had ended up numbing me.

My body can barely move in this condition.

Even if it could, there’s nothing that I can do.

As soon as I realized that, my body started trembling.

...Cold.
So cold.

——Lily.
——Rose.

Those girls are not in the vicinity.

Through the link I always used, I felt that their consciousnesses were not near.

I’ve never thought that it would make me feel this lonely.

"...Dammit. Don't get cold feet!"

I scold my frightened mind.

I have a responsibility as Lily and Rose's Master.

They must be worried.

I have to get back immediately.

At least, the fact that I'm alive is already fortunate. With this, I can get back to where the girls are. The worst that could happen is that I lost my life while I was unconscious, but right now it is far from the worst.

I was trying to calm myself down but, it was only inevitable to fall into a depressed state.

Encouraging my heart that wanted to curl up, I reared myself to look around at my surroundings.

"This place is..."

"'Tis inside of my nest."

A fascinating woman's voice answered my monologue.

I looked back immediately.

A girl with pure white thread-like hair hanging down was looking down to me in close range.

"You, you are..."

The girl with the flowing pure white hair wrapping the spider's lower body was crossing her arms and supporting her cheek with a palm while looking at me with a playful gaze.

There's no mistake.

She's the one who attacked and took me, that Arachne.

"Nest, you say...?"

I returned her gaze.

Now that you mention it, I’m not lying down directly on the ground.

Below my body, a rough but still traversable floor exists. Reasonably thick trees were gathered, the outstretched spider thread fell on top it—It gives a messy feeling but this is certainly a flooring.

Basically, it is as big as a small gymnasium. It’s quite wide.

The place I was sleeping at was a narrow corner which has remained flat. For the time being, it may have been a consideration for the injured. But if it’s like that, then that thoughtfulness is totally wrong for the condition now.

The natural tree was acting as a pillar, there’s no wall but a ceiling exists, apparently all of the structure was supported by the spider’s thread.

Threads were hanging from the ceiling, near it was a cocoon-like object. From inside the cocoon, red lights are flickering. The full view of Arachne’s nest which is vague and dark rose to the surface.

Apparently I was brought into the Arachne’s nest.
Alone, at that.

It’s a hopeless situation.

"What did you..."

Looking face to face with the Arachne, I let out a voice from my throat.

I inquired with my stiffened jaw as I was frightened.

"No, more importantly. What happened to Lily and Rose?"

"Hou... Thou worrieth of thine family before thine own self?"

The woman on top of the spider laughed pleasantly.

“Be at ease. Interest hath I none with the life of those small fries. What I seek after is but one.”

"...It's me, huh."

"Indeed."

It looks like I won't be killed for now.

If you think about it, bringing me here without killing me at that place, there must be a reason why.

…“Feeding on me in the nest peacefully.” I can’t help but pray that it is not because of that kind of cruel reasoning. If it is so, I don’t have any way to resist.

"Why did you kidnap me?"

"Dost thee knowest not?"

I asked by summoning what little courage I have left, but the Arachne questioned me in return.

“Impossible! How canst thee knowest not? Thee ought to knowest ‘what I am’.”

"...What are you talking about?"

Even if you say that, this is the first time I have met the Arachne.

There’s no way I would forget the penetrating individual’s gaze in front of me.

It seems to be true, but the presence was overwhelming everything else.

I’ve never met her so far.

Thus, I shouldn’t have a clue about her identity.

Right. There is no way I kno-...

"...Wait a minute."

A certain possibility arose in my mind, but, I denied it in an instant, thinking it’s impossible.

But I can’t fool my own instincts.

It is rooted instinctively, the special power which only I have.

"Is it possible that you are affected by my cheat ability..."

"Umu? I knowest not of that cheat ability, however..."

The girl growing on top of the white spider closed off one of her red eyes.

“Tis as thine thoughts art.”

With a tone that says all things in this world are fun and she can’t get enough of it, the girl responded to my astonishment while having fun.

"Ay? 'Milord'."

The deep red lips, began to weave a single lovely word.

"No way..."

No matter how much you deny it, the truth will not change.

The monster in front of me is the target of my [Monster Tame] cheat ability.

In other words, she's part of my ‘Family of Monsters’.

AUTHOR’S NOTES:

◆The summary of the previous story is like the usual but, the story is reaching the climax of the first volume.

◆Writing about the white spider is because of the author’s taste but, it actually exists.

An example is *Azuchigumo, it’s pretty.
*http://opencage.info/pics/files/400_6705.jpg

…Although I said that, even if it’s only a spider, for those who hate it, please don’t google it.

The one in this story has white fur, it gives off an impression of being round.

◆The next chapter is to be released on 1/11 (Saturday).

Updated: 12/07/2015 <Formatting cleanup and miniscule editing> - Blesser

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14. An Unexpected Ambush

◆Synopsis of the previous chapter:
Unknowingly, all the ‘Monsters of the Family’ had the delusion of being chummy/amicable with the Master...

◆The Master's side of the story; sandwiched in between the story of Lily and the others who were left behind.

Chapter 14.　〜Lily’s perspective〜

"How could this happen…"

I stood there, stunned.
Even though it happened in front of my eyes, I was unable to stop it.

Tonight, the incident that occurred was so sudden that it was dizzying.

Three Fire Fangs had appeared.
They banded together like an arrowhead to fight against what was clearly another monster…

An ugly figure of a huge spider monster that had a girl fused atop it, the Colony called it, ‘Arachne’.
I, myself, had seen one when I had been wandering in the forest as a Slime.

But the being that stood before us right now, did not have the same proportions as the one I had met in the past.

——Beautiful and mysterious, a white spider.
Just by thinking about it, the hairs on my body stood on its end.

The White Arachne that appeared before us, eliminated two of the Fire Fangs in an instant.
Then, just as we were staring at the scene dumbfounded, it captured Master in a cocoon of threads and took him away.

At that time, I was fighting the Fire Fang that attacked Master at a slight distance away, and had been too late in reacting.

Instead, Rose had acted immediately.
However, when she closed the distance in a single breath, one of her limbs was blown off by the Arachne.

Arachnae specialize in long-ranged combat, using their spider threads to attack from a distance. Though, this means that they should be bad at close-range combat.
Yet, Rose was defeated in that single attack.

Originally, Arachnae were not formidable monsters.
I know now, without a doubt that, that monster was, an exceptional one that had superior fighting abilities.
If we had continued fighting like that, we would have been wiped out.
The reason why that did not happen was because the White Arachne did not have its eye on us.

When Rose went down after a single hit, the White Arachne who achieved its objective relaxed and was about to leave. ...With Master.

Of course, I gave chase immediately.

However, the White Arachne hung threads in its path to hinder me, who was in pursuit.
Against an Arachne, who was a monster that has a 'specialization' in counter-attacking, chasing after it was too disadvantageous.

If I used magic, it might still be possible to catch up, but there was a possibility that Master, who was in the enemies' hands, could get caught up in it, thus, I was reluctant to use it.

I got caught by the spider threads, and in just the few seconds during which my feet had been slowed, the figure of the huge spider had already disappeared into the midst of the forest.
Together with Master.

Yes. With Master.

Master. Master. Master.
Master. Master. Master. Master. Master—!

"...Ah."

I must… ...take back Master!

"Rose!"

I called out the name of my most trusted imouto-bun*.
*<TL note: For the last time, *imouto-bun = little sister. Snickers while reading it with an English accent -Blesserz>*

“You’re okay right! Answer me! Wake up, we need to follow after Master!”

Rose, who suffered a single attack of that level, won’t be done in so easily.
I believed in her.

The loyalty that Rose has for Master, exceeds the love I have for Master.
If Master has been taken away, she would never die off submissively.

“…I’m sorry. Lily-anesama. I have blundered.”

Rose actually emerged from the shadows of the forest.
After seeing her figure… …I felt such strong relief that I almost melted back into my Slime form that instant.
<TL note: Remember Lily’s a Slime? Yeah. -Blesserz>

And at last, I noticed the huge amount of anxiety that I was carrying.

——The worry of losing my cute little imouto-bun.
——The anxiety of carrying the burden that I have to face that huge monster by myself.

Being released from putting on a strong act and the accompanying distress at the same time, my feelings and tear glands were loosened.
However, now is not the time for crying.

“It’s okay. Wait a minute, I’ll heal it immediately.”

I clamped down on my wavering feelings and started using recovery magic on Rose.

“How is it now? Can you fight?”
“Yes. But… ...one arm doesn’t seem to work anymore.”

Looking at the left arm which is holding a shield, there was a huge hole at the lower arm; it was in a state where it was barely connected by a single part.
The shield was broken in two; the place where it received the one attack fell to the ground.

Ignoring the fine cracks and dents, this is certainly beyond the scope of what my recovery magic can handle.

“To end up in this plight from just a single attack, what a useless being I am.”
“No. You’re not.”

Instead, as expected of Rose, she was be able to defend against that sudden attack in an instant.
If she had taken that attack without defending, her body would have been completely shattered into pieces by now.

Of course, if you looked at it from her perspective, with Master being taken away, that compliment would not have been comforting at all. Her heart transmitted a searing pain to me.

“If it was Lily-anesama who was at Master’s side, this incident would have never…”
"That’s impossible. Even if it was me, the result would have been the same."

These are not just some encouraging words.
If you compare Rose and myself currently, I am probably stronger.

I am a Mimic Slime.
My ability is to acquire the skills and associative abilities of the prey I have consumed, mimicking them.
The prey that I have consumed are: Magical Puppet, Fire Fang, Treant and lastly, Mizushima Miho. I can only become an inferior version of their copy at any one time, but I can use their powers no matter which form I am in.

Depending on the conditions, if I fight using all the abilities in my repertoire, I would probably be able to take on Rose with a high chance of winning.

However, even with those skills, I cannot win against that White Arachne.
Even if I fought with it a hundred times, I would be killed a hundred times without a doubt.
There is such a gap in the difference of skill.

“‘High Monster’...”

Most likely, that was a beast far beyond the realm of normal monsters, a ‘Kaibutsu’.
<TL note: See ch 12 for ref on 'Kaibutsu'>
There aren’t many monsters in this forest that can defeat something like that.

‘Unique Monsters’ like me and ‘Rare Monsters’ like Rose are not meant for combat. Even if we joined forces, we do not have any chances of winning against it.

But, that has no relation to this.

“Even if I die, I will retrieve Master at all costs.”
“That goes without saying. Even if I have to sacrifice my body, I will save Master.”

Our feelings are one and the same.

Even if our bodies will be destroyed, we will stand fast and protect the Master.
That is why we are the monsters of Master’s ‘Family’.

…Yes. That should be the way.
That’s why, I had a suspicion in my heart.

“That white spider… ...is the same as us, a part of the ‘Family of Monsters’.”

At first, I thought it was some kind of mistake, but she really is a part of the ‘Family of Monsters’.
We, the ‘Family of Monsters’, share the same pathway, and are connected to the Master by it.
So we should recognize each other.

Through the pathway between us, I felt her strong feelings of ambition.
To put it in words, perhaps it would be something like this.

“‘This is mine’. ——Through the pathway between us, I felt those thoughts of hers being transmitted to me.”

Now that I recall it, I felt chills from those violent, selfish thoughts that were transmitted.
I just prayed that the reason why she kidnapped Master was not to lead him to further harm.

“I also interpreted her intentions that way.”

Rose nodded her head, showing her consent to my opinion.

“I don’t know where the source of that desire comes from, but, no matter what, there is no doubt that her selfish desire led to the kidnapping of Master.”
“Yes. It is unforgivable.”
“But, because she took Master away in that way, there is a very low possibility that she would kill him. That is at least slightly reassuring.”
“I can’t say that for sure… ...But I don’t think that it will pay enough care towards Master.”

I had, unconsciously been clenching my teeth tightly.

“Rose saw it too right. When it kidnapped Master, most likely, it had severely injured him.”

They did not seem to be life-threatening injuries, but she had shown indifference to those serious injuries.

From the connecting path, the pain that Master felt was sent to us.
Just from remembering it, I felt the guts of this current body that I’m mimicking, boil with rage.

“Please calm down, Lily-anesama.”
“I know!”

I reflexively retorted, grinding my teeth.

Currently, Master is suffering.
Just from thinking about it, I could no longer stay still and wanted to rush out of this place immediately.

“Anyway, we need to quickly chase after Master…”

I impatiently argued with Rose..
It was at that point in time.

“Lily-san. Rose-san.”

The existence that was completely forgotten about, called out.

“It’s fine to chase after Majima-senpai but… ...Is he still alive?”

I reflexively replied, glaring in the direction of the voice.

“He’s alive! Don’t say stupid things!”

Standing there, was the girl of the same race as Master.
The one who Master has been protecting; a girl that was a year younger than him.
Her name? Kato Mana.
She was a close acquaintance of Mizushima Miho, the one I’m mimicking right now.

“I am deeply sorry, Kato-san.”

Before I could say anything in reply, Rose stepped out.
This was rare, but as one can imagine, it was probably because my heart was already frayed.

Because she knew it, my imouto-bun stood up for me, And I decided to withdraw from the potential confrontation.
Of course, it wasn't that I did not have any inner turmoils. The possibility that Master could be dead cannot even be allowed to be thought of.

"We didn't mean to forget your presence, but this is an emergency."
"I understand. You're going, right?"
"Yes. We must chase after Master no matter what."
"I don't mind if you go ahead. But are you confident that he's alive?"

Kato-san repeated the previous question, rekindling the anger inside me, but Rose did not seem to be affected.

"Of course, we are. Master is alive. The proof is none other than the fact that we are still conscious right now."
"What do you mean by that?"
"When we were just simple monsters, we did not have a conscious will."

Rose spoke in a detached voice, and replied to Kato-san's question.
That is, devoid of all emotions such as impatience and anger that had been there earlier

She was holding her composure.
Unlike me.

"The me that was a monster, did not have something like self-awareness."

Rose spoke in a voice so calm that it was scary——not. It held traces of when we were monsters before we became a 'Family of Monsters'.

"To me, the memories of when I was still a normal monster is like looking through a recording, but it is different now."
"Then, could it be that senpai…?"
"Yes. I established that which is my will, the awareness of my actions on that day, at that time, at that place.. ...As though I was guided by something, I had wandered the forest until that instant I met Master."

Towards those words that Rose had spoken, I only felt joy.

With just that, that brief moment, was probably the most vivid memory to her.
For me who was given the name Lily, it was the same as well.

——On that day, at that moment, in that cave.

I had met Master.

At first, I accidentally ate his arm but, I soon noticed that it was ‘different’.

That this is not something I should eat.
Rather, I even thought that I wanted to be eaten… …This is even a secret to Master.
<TL NOTE: !!! -Blesser>

Anyway, I met him, was wished for, and attained my self-awareness.
At that moment, vibrant colours started to appear in my world.

Sought after, desired for, it was the first time that my existence was born into this world.
In that sense, Master is, to us, in human words, our ‘mother’.

We, the ‘Family of Monsters’, love him, from somewhere deep within our hearts.
And, luckily, Master is also willing to love us as well
In that sense also, that relationship is very similar to a parent-child as well.

…This is only with reference from Mizushima Miho’s memory, since it is not so easy to understand the complex relationships of humans. In fact, to us, our Master is just our Master.
A feeling of endearment to the level of craziness, to me, it's an absolute compulsion.

We were born for the sake of granting Master’s wishes.
That’s why, if he dies, this trivial existence of mine would probably disappear as well.

Because that hasn’t happened, it means that the Master is alive.
Even now, Master must be waiting for us to rescue him.

That’s why…

“Rose! Stop talking about it and hurry up!”

My whole body was filled with frustration and impatience.
It felt as though my heart would combust into flame at the thought of it.

“That’s why, anesama.”

In contrast to me, who was burning in my emotions, Rose, who regained her composure, calmly reminded me.

“What are you going to do about Kato-san?”
“...*Ah*.”

That was a problem that I had easily forgotten about.

I finally realized the reason that Kato-san had cut into our conversation. Rather, it was quite obvious. That there was no other option, other than for her to be left behind.

“Master has decided to place Kato-san under his protection.”

Rose tinkered with her broken arm, the parts from her unusable arm’s elbow suddenly came loose and dropped to the ground.

“We cannot simply leave her here alone.”

She took out her spare arm from the wrapper she made from Fire Fangs fur, before continuing to speak to me.

“B-but, Master was taken away, and that’s…”
“Even so, it does not mean that hasty decisions should be made. It is even more important that you remain composed, Lily-anesama.”
“I—I am! Calm!”
“No. Anesama has lost herself.”
“Guh… …!”

Ahh, that’s right. I am not composed.
As if i could be calm in this situation!

He is not at my side.
Just that fact, is driving me crazy.
On that point, Rose is definitely calm.

Also, Kato-san was keeping her calm as well.

"I don't particularly mind being left behind."

Kato-san suddenly said that out loud, making us who were quarrelling, turn our heads to look at her.

I was bewildered by her statement.
Until that point, I thought the reason Kato-san was being composed, was because she saw that we were going to leave her behind and head out to rescue Master.
Actually, being left alone in this forest would equate to a death sentence for her. She should be desperate not to be abandoned.

But, she actually said “I don’t mind being left behind”.
Honestly, I don’t get it.

“Kato-san, may I know the reasoning behind your words?”

Unlike me who was full of doubts, Rose sought after the reasoning.

“Exactly what I’ve said. If you want to leave me behind, just do so. I don’t mind. But…”

Kato-san calmly spoke, with an indifferent expression as usual.

“If it is possible, please take me along as well. I think I might be of help.”

An unexpected proposal was given, something we had never considered.

The reason why she has been travelling with us, was not for the sake of self-preservation.
She is saying that she wants to come along, because she will be of help.

I questioned her directly, without hiding my suspicions.

“Even if you came along, what can you do?”
“At least, you guys will not be disobeying your Master, by not leaving me alone. Besides, the degree of hesitation when saving your Master… No, even if it’s impossible, I can be used as ‘bait’.”
“…”

Indeed, if we took Kato-san along, we will not be going against Master’s orders.
Because Master is a conscientious person, even if it means that danger will befall him, he would not abandon Kato-san. On the other hand. If Kato-san had died, it would not be hard to imagine that he would be be affected, and suffer incomparably more damage than during the 'Kaga incident'.

Conversely, we would be burdened with bringing her along, which would hinder our movements.
On the other hand, as Kato-san has said, it’s not such a bad idea if she would be ‘bait’ in the place of Master.

"...Impossible. I cannot allow it."

However, what came out from my mouth were words of rejection.

"Impossible huh, may I hear the reason why?"

"Reason? Isn't that obvious enough? I cannot trust you. It's just that simple."

When comparing the list of merits and demerits just now, it was still based on the assumption that she will not betray us.

She is not a part of the Family like we are.
She is a human.

Humans have hurt Master. Betrayed him.
Humans are creatures that live with betrayal.
At least, the possibility of that is not zero.

This involves the Master's life.
All preparations must be perfect. Furthermore, just the right amount of prudency is needed.
We cannot bring this girl, who was an uncertain factor, along.

In the first place, I had objected to that girl being brought along on Master's journey.
It was only because Master had wished for it strongly, that I had stepped down.

"In this time of emergency, we cannot bring an untrustworthy 'human' along. We do not know what will happen."

This is the conclusion that I have drawn.

"Is that so. That's a shame."

Kato accepted it without changing her demeanor after I announced my decision.

"You don't seem that disappointed."
"It's because I already thought that Lily-san would say something like that."
"...Why do you say that?"

I furrowed my eyebrows.

"For you to think that. Why?"
"That's because, Lily, you have always been wary of me right?

Kato-san touched the braids on her shoulder and answered my questions.

"Lily-san has been clinging to Mashima-senpai's side around the clock to protect him right?"
"..."

I was rendered speechless.

That was unexpected.
I could not hide my surprise that other than Rose, Kato-san could notice, and even ‘voice out’ so much of my personal thoughts when she did not speak to anyone aside from Master.

I thought she was only an empty husk, but her mind and words were sharper than I expected.

“Well, I felt that I kind of deserved it though.”
"Shut up!"

Incidentally, her intuition was spot on.
I asked in such a sharp tone of voice that I noticed it myself.

"When did you realize it? That I was on guard against you."
"That's, well, from the very beginning. ...Being looked at like that, is enough to know. To ask you to bring someone that you don't trust at all, it’s impossible isn't it. "

Kato-san was right on all points.

Reaching this point, I had no choice but to recognize it.

Just because she was difficult to understand, seemingly apathetic, and had slight facial expressions, it does not mean that the girl called Kato Mana is thick regarding the subtleties of human emotions.
Instead, she had a rather sharp intuition regarding them.

But, there was also something careless about this.

“Really, I was surprised. That you noticed my inner thoughts.”

I spoke in a tone that was quite stiff, if I do say so myself.

‘’But isn’t it pointless to point it out? Even if you did, by saying it out loud, it would only increases my vigilance against you.’’

I started to think more and more about not bringing this girl along with us.
The cleverer the person, the greater the risk of betrayal.
It might be because it was to take our focus off the rescue operation.

“Proposal rejected. Let’s go, Rose.”

The conclusion has not been changed. I turned to look back at Rose.

“But, ...Anesama.”

Rose still looked conflicted regarding the decision.
She, who had greater priority on the feelings loyalty towards Master, is probably facing a great hesitation to disobey a command that was once given.

I started to choose my words to convince Rose.

However, before I could form the words on my lips, Kato-san had beat me to the chase.

“Is it really not possible to take me along?”
“That’s my intention.”

Without even looking back, I answered.

“Really?”
“Yes.”
“No matter how much I ask?”
“You, are too much of a risk.”
“I understand.”

I heard a sigh from somewhere behind my back.

“What a believable reason indeed.”
“...”

I naturally raised my eyebrows

I don’t know if she was doing it on purpose. But Kato-san’s manner of speaking, rubbed me the wrong way.

“What are you trying to say?”
“I am asking if that is really the right decision to make.”
“What do you mean?”

I was unable to ignore that statement and finally, turned to face Kato-san.

Then, as our eyes met——

“—gh?!”

——I got goosebumps all over my skin.

I don’t understand what happened to me either.

I had only turned around to face Kato-san.
Nothing had changed about Kato-san.

A flat tone.
A somber expression.

Those were the unchangeable descriptions about the girl called Kato Mana.
That’s why, there shouldn’t have been anything disconcerting about those to me…

…No.
That wasn't it.

There was just one part that was definitely different from the rest of her.

It was her eyes.
Her eyes were different.

Within the depths of her eyes, was a blazing determination, as though she was set on something.
That was the cause of the chills that ran down my spine.

——When I thought about it later, I was thoughtless at this time.

Blood had already gone to my head, I was no longer able to make calm decisions.
That’s why I had been mistaken about the girl in front of me .

There was really nothing else to say but that I was stupid.

Facing this emergency… ...I did not realize that it was at this moment that the spirit of this young girl called Kato Mana, had been revived.

“Lily, are you sure that it’s not because of the fact that you just dislike me?”
“...W-what?”

I somehow couldn’t retort against those words which could be taken as an insult.
Looking at my expression, Kato nodded her head.

“I knew it. Lily-san, you dislike me, don't you?”

Those words seemed to plunge a knife into a weak spot in my heart.

“Wha-what exactly… are you trying to say...?”
“Just that; I understand.”

Even feigning ignorance didn't work.

“Lily-san is a Slime right? A Mimic Slime? Its abilities are to mimic the abilities of others. Using this ability, you imitated the body of Mizushima-senpai. In speech and even gestures, you are the embodiment of Mizushima herself. Because I knew Mizushima-senpai well, even though I don’t know Lily well, but I understand her habits in detail."

Don’t just say whatever that suits your convenience.
I wanted to insist, but Kato-san’s voice was filled with too much conviction.
But above all, my heart knows, that the points spoken by that girl was actually the truth.

...I wonder why I didn’t notice it. I’m not supposed to turn her into an enemy.
She has the delicate sensitivity of a girl, knows the Mizushima Miho that I am mimicking, and since she usually doesn’t do anything, she had more than enough time to observe, analyze and completely dissect my personality, to her desires.
It was such an incompatible enemy for me.
She, who knew the person that I was imitating, Mizushima Miho, was my natural enemy without a doubt.

“I... I...”

The raging, boiling anger that I felt instantly cooled below freezing point.
I started to feel fear towards the girl in front of my eyes, whom I could easily kill.

Also… …That girl had said she ‘knows’.
That’s the reason why I had begun to feel fear from just now. It was because I had been dancing in the palm of her hand.

“Isn't Lily-san just envious of me?”
“That’s… I don’t, really. Something like envy…”
“That is a lie. You hate me, because you envy me.”
“No-no way… ...I don’t want to hear it.”

This is bad.
Almost to the point of being unable to maintain this imitated body, I'm being told the truth I didn't want to face.

Immediately I tried to cover my ears.
But, Kato-san's words were faster and pierced me like a knife.

"The reason why you are so envious of me… ...is because I am the same as your Master. A human."

This was... the finishing blow.

The sentence that Kato-san flung at me held no less danger and sharpness than that of a knife, exposing something that I had been desperately hiding in this imitation of a body.

"That's why you're jealous… ...Am I right?"

——That's right.
My emotions acknowledged it before I could process those words.

…Indeed.
I can't help but envy Kato-san, who is a human.

I am a monster.
The form that I have right now, is not the ugly one that I had originally.

I only have the ability to mimic a human.
And so, it can't be helped that no matter what I turn into when I mimic, it's still a fake.

No matter how much I love Master——I will never truly be human.

That's why, I am always insecure.
After all, I can't help but think that, humans are meant to be together with other humans.
At the very least, millions of people would admit that it would be natural.

It's okay for now.
Master hates humans, so an 'imitation' like me can be the closest to him.

It's not like I want to be the closest person to him in particular.

Just being able to be together with him is enough for me, I don't mind letting others take that position.
The reason being, the Family belongs to Master, but Master does not belong to us.
I'm satisfied as long as I can be near him.

However.
However…

If Master reconciled with humans…
If he healed those deep wounds of his…
At that time, would I, a monster, still be allowed near the Master's side?

That was, an unfounded concern.
I know that.

I am the first of Master's Family.
I had met the past 'good-natured and serious student' Master, I have also been there since the moment he became 'the Master'.

That's why, I know.
In this world, I am the only one who knows.
The truth about Master.

When Master was hurt in his mind and body, when he fell into the darkness of despair, just before he reached the state of death, he wished in his heart.

——Somebody, help me.

This was clearly a statement filled with contradiction.
Because, after he no longer believe in anyone, just before his death, he wished in his heart 'for the help of another'.

Impossible.
The logic is flawed.
A contradiction was created.

However… ...if you think about it, it isn't that strange at all.

It is a common that once someone has walked the border between life and death, his values will be changed.
Master is like that as well.

But, does that really mean that all the values that we have cultivated until now, will be completely turned inside out?
Even if they will be overturned, I wonder if nothing will remain.

I wonder if those seventeen years of youth that he had, could be taken that lightly.
It might be obvious to think that way since, he was who someone who had once lost everything, but no matter what, thinking that way about him might be belittling him.

In other words, it's something like this.

——Master held such deep emotional wounds that would not let him trust another human.
——On the other hand, even now, Master is still yearning to be able to believe in others.

That's what the seventeen-year-old youth, Mashima Takahiro, has been carrying. A fatal contradiction.

The large contradiction put a strain, gap and discord in his heart, it is possible that it will eventually lead to his ruin.

Possibly, we, the 'Family of Monsters', came into existence out of that opening that he made.
Because I was aware of that, I was always uneasy.

Perhaps someday I will no longer be of use to the Master.
That's just my secret… …but it was an overwhelming fear greater than any other.

That's why, I am unable to fully deny Kato-san's words.
It can't be helped that I'm envious of humans, an emotion so overwhelming that… …It could entirely overwhelm me.
That was the reason why I refused to travel with Kato-san, the human, in this situation… …
That was too ugly of a behavior.

If, if that was the truth…
Someone like me, doesn't have the qualifications to stand by the side of Master…

"May we leave you here for now, Kato-san?"

Just as I was on the brink of losing control of my form and was about to collapse...

"I was going to watch over Lily-anesama until she has cooled down but…"

The tension between us was cut by a feminine voice slightly tinged with anger.

She raised my head that I had unknowingly bowed.

The wooden back that had been protecting mine.

“No matter what, haven’t you said too much?”

Rose said in a firm voice as she cut into the space between Kato-san and I, holding her left arm which had a missing half and connecting it to a spare.
That voice sounded like that of an intimidating beast, shaking the air of the forest.

“Please stop changing the topic, Kato-san.”
“What topic would that be?”
“Lily-anesama hating you may or may not be the truth. However, isn’t that a completely different matter with you coming along with us?”

Rose’s tone had a tinge of anger.
She was angry for my sake.

“I am unable to let the fact that you intentionally tied both matters together and cornered Lily-anesama, slide.”
“...”

Kato-san glanced at Rose and kept quiet.
A few seconds passed, and she let out a sigh.

“Well, as expected of Rose-san, I can’t get pass you.”

Saying that, Kato-san lowered her eyebrows as though expecting a severe punishment.
And just like that, the vestige of the girl who pressured me, disappeared.

“I would like to apologize. Sorry. Even though I do not know if you will forgive me.”

What stood there, was a girl with the impression of being slightly gloomy, the face of a young girl.

“If you can read Lily-anesama that well, you should understand that she had not let her personal emotions sway her analysis regarding you.”
“That’s right. Lily-san was only deeply suspicious. It was only because Mashima-senpai is a person of importance to her, that she was cautious in the decision of bringing me along. It is completely unrelated to the envy that Lily-san held towards me.”

Skillfully, she immediately manipulated her speech and admitted her wrongs.

What? That was too fast.
I, who was left behind, could only watch on as the flow of the conversation changed.

“...So that’s that. Lily-anesama.”

After she finished speaking, Rose turned to face me.

“Rose, I…”
“Please relax, Lily-anesama. Anesama is not such a selfish person. I can guarantee that myself.”

Rose slightly softened her tone.
Finally, I was able to catch up with the current situation.

But, at the same time...
I was unable to accept Rose’s words.

“B-but I, envied…”

The words that Rose spoke were gentle.
Yet, it was unable to dispel the fear that I had been holding on to.

“I… indeed had been feeling envious towards Kato-san…”

Kato-san had pried out a harsh side of me that I had never noticed.

“I might have been jealous…”

I can no longer pretend that it wasn’t true.

“Carrying such a dirty emotion… ...I’ll be hated by Master.”

Master despaired in the filthiness of humans.
Sinking into such depths of despair, I wanted to heal him of it.

I had decided that.

That is why I——must be more beautiful, purer; more so than anyone.

The reason why I had averted my eyes to the envy in my heart, was because I did not want to acknowledge it.

If Master knew that I possessed such a filthy heart, Master might hate me.

I… I was afraid.
It was more excruciating than anything in the world.

Thinking that it might come to that, was so scary, so scary, that I couldn't help but shrink into myself, trembling in fear and shiver, almost to the point of bursting out in tears——

"That's impossible."

——She proclaimed it in a matter-of-fact tone.

"Eh?"

Rose looked at me with a straight face, expressionless.
As though wanting to say 'What are you trying to say?'.

"…Eh?"
"I am unable to understand the subtitles of human emotions. It is hard to say that I understand Lily-anesama's grief."

Rose softly wiped away the tears that pooled in my eyes.

"Yet, that is why, those insecurities of Lily-anesama, are very human-like."

Rose's words were something like a divine revelation to me, who was trapped in my shell of childish thoughts.

"Human… -like…?"
"Yes. Master is fond of that side of anesama. Even I, a wooden doll, can tell something like that."
"Indeed."

The one who agreed with the statement was, surprisingly, Kato-san.

"More than filthiness, it's more like an unpleasant part that comes with being human. Being insecure about the relationship between you and the person you like, if you completely don't feel jealous at all… ...Wouldn't the man lose his confidence? Just a little bit of jealousy, is rather adorable, don't you think so?"
"...Are you the one to talk!?"

That girl, who exposed the ugly side of me that I didn't even want to see.

As I glared at Kato-san with eyes filled with resentment, Kato-san slightly averted her gaze. She showed the rare attitude of an extremely normal girl.

"Ah—that. Shall I say that it was unexpected that you would become that depressed? It would have been good enough for me if Lily-san had arrived at her decision unhesitatingly. But, to not know the answer to such a simple question, I did not even consider..."

Abruptly, Kato-san cut off her excuses.

There was a very subtle change, but a melancholic expression flitted across her face.
I wonder if it would be understandable if I said that it looked as though she realized something extremely important.

While my attention was occupied by the change in her demeanor, she reverted her usual expressionless face, albeit somewhat gentler than before.

"'As usual' you're thickheaded in regards to guys, huh. Well, it doesn't seem to be only that way now."
"Shut up!"

…Huh?

I retorted reflectively, but I was puzzled in my heart.

I seemed to have misheard something after speaking just now… …Now, I wonder if it's because of something weird that Kato-san said.

Just now, something. Something… …Something had felt, nostalgic.
What was it, I wonder. I'm not sure.

Already, Kato-san had returned to her expressionless face.
I stared at her, and she stared back at me.

Just for an instant, as though reluctant to admit the miracle, we maintained our gaze on each other.

"Now that anesama has bounced back, let's return to the original topic."

Returning me who had been engrossed in something else, to reality, is the composed voice of Rose.

“So, in the end, what should we do regarding Kato-san, Lily-anesama?”

I came back to myself in an instant.

That's right.
Do not forget. We are in the middle of an emergency situation.

And so, because I became able to regain my own composure, I couldn’t say that the time was meaninglessly spent even if my lips were torn apart.
But, even so, there’s no difference since it’s an emergency situation now.

“Yes.”

We can not afford to waste any more time. Decisions need to be made immediately.
For that to happen, first we need to refocus.

And so, I once again… …Or perhaps, for the first time tonight, directly faced the two companions in front of me.

<AUTHOR’S NOTES>

◆For the first time, the story is told from another’s perspective that’s not the MC's.
At first. I left it as XX’s perspective. But later, I wrote it so that, as soon as you start reading it, it becomes apparent immediately.
There may be people who dislike it, or those who are fine with it. Because it is a matter of interest, by referencing from other works, I focused on making it easy to understand.

◆The content was… …Kato-san’s resuscitation.
<TL note: That's to say, her emotions and spirit. She had been just going with the flow up till now, opinion-less for the most part. -Blesserz>
The reason why she had trying to destroy the ‘mind’ of the Slime by intently stomping on it, will be covered the next time.

◆Lily had somewhat taken the role of a mascot until now.
It would be great if she could be drawn correctly.

◆It’s not something as concrete as foreshadowing, but finally the contradiction in the prologue can be resolved.

◆The next update will be on 1/15 (Wednesday).

15. The Clasping of Hands

Synopsis of the previous chapter:

The unexpected middle-boss: Kato-san.

Chapter 15. ~Lily's perspective~

In order to decide what to do with Kato-san, we need to start things all over again right here.

Of course, since I had made the situation so confusing, it was my job to divide up the roles.

"I'm sorry for losing my composure, Rose."

Firstly, I lowered my head to my imouto-bun.

"I wasn't calm. I got swayed by my emotions."

"Lily-anesama…"

"I have caused you problems. I'm very sorry."

Looking back, from the moment Master was abducted, I had allowed my body to move in anger and impatience towards that White Arachne.

"My anger caused quite a few problems for Rose, but now I'm keeping it under check."

"No need to worry about it."

Rose accepted my apology with a look that told me not to mind it.

“Lily-anesama, losing your composure here is not what Master would wish for, am I correct?”

“Yes. I will be more careful from now on.”

For me, when something happens to Master, I can’t help feeling shaken.

I understand now after this incident.

I can’t become like Rose.

But, even when I’m shaken up, I should try to behave as rationally as possible.
I should be striving harder in order to do that.

I admit it. I was immature.

Now that I know, I should work on becoming more mature.

“Also, about what we should do with Kato-san from now on, I’m leaving it all to Rose. Is that okay?”

“Understood.”

As if she had already predicted what I would say, Rose smoothly accepted my request.
We, who were born as ‘sisters’, have to act according to the situation and be Master’s power. At times like this, it helps for the discussion to end fast.

“Are you sure?”

I shrugged at Kato-san's interjection.

"It's okay. Or rather…"

"The reality is that we are compelled to do so."

As I stopped speaking, Rose took over.

"Right now, you have 'crushed' Lily-anesama. You are currently the biggest obstacle. Anesama, who is highly suspicious by nature, no longer has confidence in her own judgements. Because of that, I am obliged to cope with it."

I've somehow managed to accept the feelings of jealousy towards Kato-san.

This is thanks to Rose and… Kato-san, which I don't really want to admit and give the credit to her.

But, I on the other hand, couldn't dispel the doubt that 'my jealousy would give birth to selfish decisions.'

For example, if I decided to not bring Kato-san right here.

I couldn't discard the doubt of whether or not 'that decision is affected by my own personal feelings.'

I don't believe in myself, who caused trouble for Rose, because I was swept up by my emotions to that extent.

Because of that, I'll leave it to Rose here.

I will interfere if I need to, but Rose is entrusted with the final decision.

…I wonder if Kato-san had already predicted all of this.

According to my nature, which is deeply suspicious of people, to me, she's sending out seeds of doubt all over the place.

“I don’t want you to misunderstand.”

Kato-san said with a tone mixed with a wry smile, as if she knew what I was thinking.

“I don’t really think that Rose is more naive than you. I didn’t mean it like that."

It should be so.

The possibility of me becoming a negotiation partner is zero.

If it’s Rose, the talk will come through.

Because of that, it sounds like Rose is a more naive person, but the reality is totally different.

She’s only being fair.

Unlike me, she doesn’t make decisions based on her emotions.

And precisely because I believe that, I left it to her in this situation.

“Then, please.”

“Understood.”

I moved one step backward, and watched the two confronting each other.

“Kato-san.”

The first one to speak was Rose.

“If I were to negotiate, it’s possible to bring you along. That judgement wasn’t wrong. Actually, I have been wanting to bring you along since the start. …But.”

Rose paused. If she were a human, she would probably be heaving a sigh.

“This way of doing things is wrong, is it not? There is no meaning for me to become your enemy as a result of being rejected by Lily-anesama, am I wrong?”

It seems peaceful now, but Rose was observing my argument with Kato-san. She seemed to be remembering the angry feeling clearly.

Rose, who is a wooden puppet, isn’t supposed to be familiar with delicate human emotions.

For example, even if she knows that Master is suffering, she wouldn’t understand what made him suffer like that.

But still, it’s not like she doesn’t have any feelings.

Unlike me who saw Master being assaulted directly, she doesn’t have a bad impression of the humans who hurt him in the past. She’ll also get mad at me if I, as a companion, tease him.

If done poorly, Kato-san may not have been able to negotiate with Rose.

Therefore, Rose blamed Kato-san’s desperately chosen method.

That means Rose was being angry for Kato-san's sake.

Rose directs her sincerity towards humans and Family equally.

This form of anger is different from me, who views humans with hostility. She probably still has a different view than me regarding the human named ‘Kato Mana’.

"There are other proper ways. If it is Kato-san, would not it be possible to choose another way?”

"For example, allowing Rose-san to leverage and persuade Lily-san—something like that?"

Rose nodded at Kato-san's example.

"Anesama may not want to hear what I am saying because blood rushed to her head. ...No. I am certain she would not listen to my reasoning and had become impatient, thus she would have rushed out and went alone."

Isn't that too much?

...Well I couldn't deny it.

I had lost all reasoning. If I continued talking for 5 more minutes like that, I would've gone to Master's side even if I was alone.

"Even now, Lily-san still has that look of wanting to rush out alone, right?"

Kato-san seems to share the same opinion.

I'm a bit depressed to have been seen through that easily.

"I will not let Lily-anesama go to that White Arachne's place alone. I would follow after her immediately. However, even if it came to that, I would carry Kato-san and give chase. Because I am not as suspicious of you as anesama, and I also have no intentions of defying Master's orders."

"Well, that’s right."

Kato-san agreed to Rose's words.

"The possibility of that happening is quite high. If I want you guys to take me, I probably should have used a better method."

Kato-san acknowledged all of Rose's words.

"But if it's like that, Senpai will not be saved."

After admitting it—That choice was denied.

In short, she understood all that Rose had said from the beginning, still, she intentionally used that method. *

"If it's only to bring me along, it's as Rose-san said, I can ask for it gently. You see, I'm not willing to hurt Lily-san. …However, is it okay to only do that? There's no meaning if Senpai is not helped. Am I right?"

"It certainly… …seems that way."

Confusion was apparent in Rose's voice.

There's no meaning if Master is not saved.

Yes, that's right. What Kato-san said is right. But, why did it lead to her acting aggressively a few minutes ago? Rose doesn't know, and I'm the same.

Kato-san placed her hand on her chest and said to us, the 'Family of Monsters', who were showing our cluelessness.

“I do not posses the power to fight. Because of that, I can’t help Mashima-senpai.”

Kato Mana is just a human with no power to fight.

There’s no way her cheat-ability could awaken at such a convenient time.

She, who is only a human, can’t do anything.

“But, that means, right now you guys are the same right?”

After recognizing her own weakness, Kato-san pointed out the truth.

“The White Arachne. Before, you said that it’s a ‘High Monster’ right? ‘Don’t fight it. Even escaping from it will depend on your luck.’ It’s a monster that must not be fought. You said it like that right. Preparing to sacrifice yourself is okay. But if your purpose is not fulfilled, then you’ll only die for naught.”

Kato-san's words couldn't be disputed in any way.

No matter how willing we are, we won't be able to recover Master if we don't have enough power.

There are also things we can't do anything about no matter how we feel about it. This is the fact of the cruel world we live in.
<TL note: Kono utsukushiki zankoku na sekai ni wa~ Cookies for those who catch the reference>

"Even for you guys, you can't help Mashima-senpai. Then, it won't be any different from me who doesn’t have any combat prowess."

For example, if just a moment ago I yelled threateningly and charged at the White Arachne recklessly, we probably would have been crushed without being able to do a single thing.

Of course, it won't be possible to save Master.

It's the same as dying a dog's death.

Kato-san continued after pointing out our powerlessness.

"However, I am different from you guys. You guys have the ability to fight. Even if you're no match, you can still fight. If you fought, it may be possible to save Mashima-senpai depending on the method employed. But, that is still an ‘if’. It won't happen if you charge in blindly.”

This too, was pointed out, hitting a sore spot.
We neglected the fact that we knew that the White Arachne has overwhelming power, and were going to challenge it without having a proper strategy.

If you think about it calmly, it's quite an impossible feat.

Something needs to be done.

Carrying out the rescue operation carefully is a must. If that’s impossible, of course we have to put in more effort to increase the chances of success, even if it’s by a little.

If it still couldn't be done... then this was completely my fault.

I wasn't calm. Blood was rushing to my head.

Seeing me in such a condition, Kato-san should have been at a loss on how to handle me.

Would persuading help me to calm down? ...No. There's little hope of it.

Even when Rose had told me to be calm again and again, it did not have any effect on me, so

there is no way Kato-san’s words will, either. In the first place, if just a few more minutes had passed, I would have went out alone. She acted like that in order to buy time to persuade me.

To put in other words, we were probably like 'a mother panicking to help her child that has fallen into the river.’

Getting swept away by the raging river when he can't swim. I couldn't be persuaded. Words don't even get through me. Rather, even now I look like I would rush out alone. Letting us get swept away together would only increase the number of dead bodies.

That's why, the only way to stop me is to hit my head from behind.

If you think about it, Rose might have noticed the danger I was in.

But she didn’t expect her to 'hit my head'. There is no helping it. She, who doesn't understand the nature of the human heart, doesn't know why I became like that. Thus, she wouldn't know what to do.

On the other hand, Kato-san, who's a human, can only ‘hit' us with her weak physical strength.

That's why she instigated us, listened to us… On top of that, she hit us with crushing words which pointed out our weaknesses.

Though I’m reluctant to accept it, if you think of it in that way, her method can be understood... ...My heart still feels gloomy after I was crushed by that reality.

"Just bringing me along will not change anything. If you guys can't regain your composure, you won't be able to save Senpai. That was my limit. As a result, I hurt both of your feelings. I won’t back down even if I were to be left behind..”

If you decide with a fair perspective as much as possible, and eliminate the emotional factors, Kato-san’s actions were probably not the best, but it was at least better than Lily’s.

In fact, I have already regained my composure. She has already produced results.

There are probably other ways, but it was critical to decide what was the best choice in that short amount of time. Rather, Kato-san's wisdom should be praised as she was able to anticipate our actions all up to that and 'hit my head in an instant.'

Because of her, we could think things through and regain our composure.

Saving Master is certainly the most important thing to do. If we couldn't do it, then there's no meaning in throwing our lives away. It was no different from blindly doing a suicide attack.

That's, just as Kato-san said...

…Eh?

But, isn't it a bit strange?

"For us, the Family, there's no meaning if we can't save Master. It is as you said, but..."

Before I realized it, I forgot about leaving the matters here to Rose, and joined in the two's conversation.

"Why is Kato-san, a human, so worried about Master?"

If I recall, from a while ago Kato-san has been going on about how "it's pointless if we couldn't save Master" kind of assumptions.

For me, as part of the Family, there's no objection to sacrifice myself to rescue Master, but that's only the viewpoint of someone from the Family.

Kato-san is a human. However, she acted based on our reason as part of the Family.

It was possible that she had randomly run her mouth off to stop me, who had gone out of control. I can also determine that she did not purposefully do those things to daringly get on

Rose’s bad side.

In other words, Kato-san was hoping to save Master too.

Also, she’s strong; she doesn’t second guess herself.

Thinking back on it, I could come to an understanding about other things.

For example, the reason why Kato-san had cast off her state of emotionlessness in such a timely manner was possibly because of the current state of emergency we are in.

She’s worried about the condition of Master, who was kidnapped by the Arachne. She wanted to help. But we, who essentially had no strategy, wouldn’t be able to save Master at this rate.

In this state, it’s useless to continue looking at each other.

Her emotions were starting to recover slowly. If her mind gets revived here in one go as well… It would be a great timing.

But, even if that's correct, then another suspicion comes to mind.

If she's acting on the same logic as us, the ‘Monsters of the Family’, that would mean that she, a human, feels the same way we do towards the Master.

That was suspicious to me.

That’s why I asked.

The suspicion I held, was at least reasonable for me.

There’s no choice but to guess right now. If Master was here in this place, he would’ve thought about the same thing.

However, it seems to be different for Kato-san.

“Why, you say?”

Kato-san’s voice was sharp as she asked back.

As if dripping with poison.

“Am I not allowed to worry about Senpai’s condition?”

It was, a deadly poison named *anger*.

“Uuu…”

I shrank as those boiling feelings were turned towards me.

Until now, Kato-san had never shown any ill feelings.

Even when she had ‘hit’ and ‘crushed’ me, she wasn’t this furious.

So to say, her hostility can be clearly seen to this extent. She probably had only been acting in order to fulfil her motives—for the sake of helping Master.

But, it's different at the moment.

“Isn’t it alright even if I’m not a part of the ‘Family of Monsters’?”

For a single instant, she directed a huge amount of anger at me.

It was only a silent anger. Kato-san didn’t raise her voice at all.

But, even without raising it, deep pain and sorrow could be transparently felt from the trembling of her voice.

Probably, because of the careless remark I made. It touched a deeper wound, one that could even make her, the rational one, lose it.

“I’m…”

I opened and closed my mouth several times, and bit my lips.

Lastly, Kato-san lowered her eyes.

“...I’m sorry. I lost my composure.”

She seemed to have successfully regained her self-control in just a short time.

There was no longer any anger coloring Kato-san’s words.

“I, I am sorry too. It seems like I said something weird.”

I lowered my head.

If you look at the current situation, it seems that Kato-san is truly worried about Master.

I don’t know the reason why she would hold such feelings. As expected, I don’t have the courage to ask once more. I didn’t mean to tease Kato-san and anger her. I’m not so nasty that I could impudently poke at something that I shouldn’t, out of curiosity.

“Shall we get back to the topic at hand?”

Rose was the one who broke the delicate atmosphere between us.

She’s always calm. She’s not showing any signs of panic concerning Master’s condition.

Kato-san seemed to agree, and slightly lowered her head to Rose.

“I understand why Kato-san tried to cool our heads down. Although it was a bit rough, I approve of its effectiveness.”

“Thank you.”

“No. We are the ones who should thank you instead. Because of you, we did not throw ourselves into a reckless suicide attack. But…”

“Yes. This is still only the beginning.”

Rose solemnly nodded at Kato-san’s words.

“Alright. We have regained our senses. However, it will have been meaningless if we do not have an actual plan to save Master. Unfortunately, I am not able to come up with any effective strategies. Lily-anesama—”

Rose looked back, and I shook my head.

“—I too, couldn’t think of anything.”

Once again, Rose turned to Kato-san.

“Kato-san said that you want to go together to save Master, correct? If we bring you along, what can you do in this urgent situation?”

“Even I understand that it’s not something that simple.”

Kato-san replied Rose’s question with a negative.

“There is no way I can do it by myself. Rather, there’s nothing I can do. I understand that I can’t do anything in that situation. …I would just like to make sure, but is there any chance that we could defeat that spider using our skills in a direct confrontation?”

“...It is impossible, is it not? Fighting it one hundred times will get you killed one hundred times, one thousand times and you will be killed one thousand times.

Rose calculated the winning percentage calmly.

“Either Lily-san or Rose-san… No, can either of you continue on, regardless of whichever of you dies?”

“However… I think it’s impossible. It’s on the level where you would be thankful if you only got injured.”

“...What a retort you have there, huh, Lily-san.”

“Tha-that is… Because it was in the heat of the moment.”

With an amazed face, Kato-san quickly smoothened her facial expression and pressed on with her questioning.

“Then, what if it’s only to save Mashima-senpai?”

“That is impossible as well.”

Although the hurdle was lowered by a bit, but this question was also answered with a “No” by Rose.

“Because there’s too much of a difference in ability. …Perhaps. If a miracle happened, then it might be used to stall for just a moment.”

“Stalling is it?”

“If only for a moment, perhaps. Still, it would not change the fact that you would be killed eventually.”

If so, then there’s no meaning to it.

I too, have the same general perception as Rose.

The situation is hopeless.

As the dialogue continues, the despair seems to be deepening.

"I see. Thank you, Rose-san. I have grasped the situation. ...As I thought, this is the worst possible situation."

That’s right. We’re in a severe situation.

Presently, we don’t have the means to fight that White Arachne and take Master back.

Rushing out to attack the enemy without thinking, without discussion, is the most foolish course of action. But just because you worry about it, doesn't mean that you'll be able to come up with a good plan.

“For now, I have one thing to say.”

Kato-san opened her mouth as we were all feeling the severity of the situation and bearing bitter thoughts.

“At this rate, it seems that even if Lily-san and Rose-san go to save Mashima-senpai, you won’t be able to save him, who’s trapped.”

“Yes. It seems like that would be so.”

"That's why, in this case, if you can, you would even borrow a cat's paw, right? A person like me may be useful too, you know."
<TL note: Japanese saying for borrowing any manner of help that can be given, no matter how insignificant--Blesser>

“...The situation where we can’t save Master can’t get worse. That’s why, bringing Kato-san along will turn the situation around and couldn’t make it any worse, like that?”

“Yes. Also, there are other things that I can do.”

Kato-san hit the area around the corner of her eye using her fingertip while closing one of her eyes.

“If two people thinking about it is not enough, then three people might be able to come up with something.”

“Three people pulling the stops… you say?”

“Yes. At least, I think it’s a somewhat better proposal than what seems like something with no chance, where we die an honorable death.”

Before, like this, Kato-san had crushed us. If she becomes our strategist it would be fairly encouraging.

Of course, there are still issues around her trustworthiness.

I don’t trust her like how I trust Rose. Even now, I feel that I don’t want to bring uncertain elements along.

It’s a fact that she had stopped us from our reckless suicide, although there are some questions regarding her declaration of wanting to save Master, but if we start questioning, there will be no end to this.

But, even now, all these ideas hold no meaning.

Trustable or not, it doesn’t matter in these circumstances.

What is certain is that, at this rate we won’t be able to bring back Master.

Also, that kind of overturning strategy, we won’t be able to do it.

Like Kato-san pointed out, right now we’re stuck.

If so, we have no choice but to bet on the unidentified element.

We have to rely on Kato-san.

…Goodness.

Sometime ago our problem was whether Kato-san can be trusted or not, but since then it has changed into whether her help should be accepted or not.

Lastly, how would Rose make the decision…

“Lily-san too, even Rose-san, the truth is you guys understand, right?”

Kato-san only spoke vehemently to double-check.

“By yourselves, you’re unable to get out of this stalemate. That’s why you’re betting on the smallest possibilities. That is also why Rose-san had spent valuable time on scrutinizing me, a human, am I wrong? If so, this is not the time to be saying this 4-5 times.”

Kato-san, who said that, made a warm smile.

“Please let me help save Mashima-senpai. I’ll show you that I can be useful.”

Kato-san held out her hands which were put on her chest.

Looking at those palms, Rose turned her head monotonically.

I understand my imouto-bun’s heart very clearly.

Regardless of whether the ‘path’ is connected or not, me and her have the exact same feeling.

“Anesama.”

“I know.”

There was nothing more to be acknowledged.

We were completely defeated without a fight by a human girl who has no fighting power.

* * *

Ten minutes have passed. After the strategy meeting, we proceeded to track the Arachne.

Fortunately, we share the connection of being Family to Master. Our relationship is not something substandard that would break just because of some distance between us.

Because Kato-san, who’s only a human, couldn’t match our movements, she’s being held by Rose as we move.

This is quite a dangerous way to travel.

Even as I mimicked a Fire Fang’s sense of smell to track down the enemy, but it’s still not a sure thing. There are many obstacles in the forest so our speed was around trotting pace, but still we must absolutely not neglect to check our surroundings. Above all, Rose’s hands are occupied.

Normally, this situation is to be avoided at all costs. But now, we can’t do anything about it.

We pray that we will not encounter any monsters until the end.

No. When you think about the reckless challenge we're going to face, if we don't have at least that kind of luck, we'll be doomed.

Because now we're going to challenge that white atrocity.

In the end, I couldn't come up with any other convenient tactics to confront it.

Of course. No matter how many amateurs like us gathered to think about it, the probability will

remain the same.

Still, we will challenge it.

The chances of success is non-existent—no, not completely.

There's a plan. Though the chances of success is akin to a random gamble, we still have hope.

Said Kato-san, the strategist.

"Do you have the resolve to live on, no matter what happens?"

If it's for Master, our answer has already been decided.

In order to pull the victory that seemed like a thin thread, we went towards Master's side, proceeding into the sinking darkness of the forest at night.

~ AUTHOR'S NOTES ~

◆ Kato-san is like the middle boss that can't be defeated which sometimes appears in games.

For example, in TOD 2, it's Barbatos.
<TL NOTE: It's probably Tales of Destiny 2, this guy: http://aselia.wikia.com/wiki/Barbatos_Goetia>

In Sazae-san, it's Anago-san.
<TL NOTE: You can look it up here… don't know if it's the correct one though. http://sgcafe.com/2014/10/15-anime-characters-whose-age-surprising-according-goo/>

◆ ...It's an old story.

◆ Next chapter will be on 1/18 (Saturday)
<TL NOTE: Fun Fact ~ "Kato" is repeated 66 times in this chapter (-_-) *and "Rose" is 53 times lol… Why so many…* o_0 -Vince>

16. The Restraints of the White Spider

Synopsis of the previous chapter:

From Kato-san's perspective, the mid-boss seems to be Lily.

To challenge the boss, start by hunting up the ranks of (tentative) comrades.

Chapter 16.

"My 'Family of Monsters'…?"

The White Arachne that attacked us, kidnapped me, splendidly kicked Rose on top of it and successfully escaped from Lily, was a part of my 'Family of Monsters'.

"No way, that's…"

At first, I doubted my senses, 'what's with that', but the instinctive part of me could not deny that this one was a part of my family as well.

Then, I doubted my own sanity, but it didn't seem to be an illusion sprouting from my despair.

"If you were part of my 'Family of Monsters'… ...Why did you attack me?"

Everyone in my 'Family of Monsters' thinks highly of me.

And I respond in kind to their feelings.

What we have between each other, is trust and love.

From a stranger's point of view, our relationships might appear weird.

But to us, that is the most important thing, that's why, the acknowledgement of others don't matter.

I love Lily and Rose.

As their Master.

That is the meaning of a family.

That's why, I thought that I would be able to cherish new members that join in the future as well.

Unconditionally. Instinctively.

That was what I thought.

"Why…"

"Surprise indeed, that thou art poor in thy perception of others, Milord"

In a mocking tone, the White Arachne said.

"Since a while ago hath I said 'I fancieth thee', there is naught a reason aside."

"I… You want... me?"

What's that supposed to mean?

What value does she think I have?

As expected, I don’t get it.

But, thinking about it, it didn’t kill me and brought me all the way here, to its own nest.

That, the aim of the white spider in front of me, is not my life, but in my person.

It doesn’t seem like I would be killed for now.

Although that’s a reassuring point…

“Thou art not aware of thine own worth.”

‘Kukuku’, the white girl laughed.

Looking at that expression, I remembered a sight.

——Children, observing bugs in a box.

If I reverse the roles of the spider (bugs) and humans, it would be exactly the same scene.

Sweat ran down my cheeks unpleasantly.

I wouldn’t be killed this minute.

Was that supposed to be a reassuring point?

I’m an idiot. I’ll die while wrapped in her spider threads. There is no way that I’ll be saved from that dark future.

I must... somehow... escape from this place.

But, how?

The most logical way would be to wait for help from Lily and the others. But, that's the most unrealistic one as well.

They are most likely... No, they will definitely be coming to save me. They will arrive. But, in reality, the result would probably be harsh; they cannot win with that White Arachne as an opponent.

Before they arrive, I must escape the hands of this White Arachne with my own efforts.

If I don't, it's the end. It'll be all over.

But, how can I escape from her hands? Good ideas can't seem to come to mind.

The arachne who's oblivious to my inner turmoil, drew closer to me with her eight spider legs.

Then, a bewitching smile broke out across her face.

"In regards to thine own worth… ...Milord appears to be in need of education."

The woman spoke while tilting her head, her silky white hair fell from her shoulder.

Filled with excitement flowing through her entire body, under the transparent and soft chiffon-like material, two soft-looking bulges that looked as though they could crush something, can be seen.

The word 'malicious' came to mind. Her every single gesture, had an obscene feeling to it.

Originally, the sight of a devilishly beautiful young woman being fixated on a grotesque monster, such as a spider, would be enough to make anyone avert their sights away from reality.

Rather, I thought that for her, it only served to accentuate her delicateness and beauty as a young woman.

Fighting a wave of dizziness that hit me as I started to remember the abnormality of the situation and coquetry of the girl in front of me, I had to fight to keep my sanity.

I had the belief that if I just let down my guard for a little, I'll be completely 'swallowed up'.

"Educating…?"

I can't afford to offend her for now. I'll try to stall for time while looking for an opening. ...I don't know if such a thing is possible, but I have no choice except to believe in it for now.

"What on earth are you trying to teach me?"

"Let us see. Firstly, thine meaning of monsters that Milord calleth Miladies. Doth thee knoweth?"

"Monsters… ...you mean what they are?"

"Forsooth."

"That is, monsters with magical power, right?"

As I thought about the intention behind those words, I moved my mouth to answer.

"Due to possessing magical powers, monsters hold abnormal strength. For example, Fire Fangs can spit fire, Magical Puppets can move like humans, Slimes can maintain their half-liquid state, plant monsters like Treants can move like animals, all of it, is because they have magic."

"Aye. Henceforth, doest thou knoweth why monsters absorb magic?"

"That is… …To store the magic in the atmosphere in the body, if I'm not wrong?"

Previously, Lily had spoken on that subject as well. The one with the example of heavy metals, but it doesn't seem like it will work on the White Arachne, so I remained silent.

The White Arachne had a face that was slightly bored.

“Thou knoweth well. …It cometh to mind, Milord had a wooden puppet didst thou not? Hath it spoken of it to thee?”

The wooden thing should be referring to Rose. Speaking of that, I hope she's alright. She seems to gotten done in badly, so I'm feeling worried.

“Then, thou should hath known that ‘Miladies’ of thine hath not awareness?”

"Previously, I remember hearing a little of that matter…"

Lily seemed to have told me something like that during a bedtime story.

Before meeting me, those girls had no self-awareness. They were simple existences that wandered around the forest.

“I heard from my comrades that the moment they became my Family, they had attained their awareness for the first time.”

“Oh, oh. Twas that case indeed!”

The girl looked ecstatic and said in a cheerful voice.

Then, simultaneously, those spider legs on her lower half started kicking up a storm.

Almost destroying the floor with her trampling.

As well as the various trees aligned together that were used as pillars and connected by spider threads to the ceiling, producing sounds as though they were about to fall.

“Then, doth thee perceive? Thine own worth, Milord!”

Now, I am troubled by this spider.

Realization hit me strongly. I bit my lips lightly.

After her outburst, the White Arachne finally stopped her feet.

But, perhaps some excitement still remained, the smooth cheeks of the woman sensationally reddenned.

“Thou dost not comprehend. That incomprehension is endearing.”

The Arachne drew even closer, bending its legs.

Already, she was within touching distance. The surprisingly smooth white hairs of the spider brushed against my arm.

The girl stretched her arm and patted the area around my shoulders. ——With a tearing sound, my wreckage of a shirt was suddenly removed.

The slender fingers of the Arachne touched my upper body, slowly stroking it.

The red eyes of the girl looked up at me as the gentle pressure gave me pleasurable goosebumps.

”This hath naught to conversation prior, but before becoming part of thine Lordship’s Family, I hast awareness of mine self.”

“...What?”

My eyebrows shot up from the Arachne's words.

That's... different from what I heard.

“Even so, it was a pittance. Compared to Milord, twas something too incorperal to call a person’s ego.”

The White Arachne spoke words of self-deprecation.

Yet, on the contrary, the girl atop the white spider let out ecstatic breaths. It was evidence that she was in a good mood.

That was supposed to be something favorable for me.

Since it doesn’t seem like my heart will be impaled by the hand that was currently drawing a circle on my chest.

Yet. I couldn’t be honestly happy with her good mood.

In fact, I felt a chilly feeling. A premonition that the happier she was, the more possible it seemed that she could fall into a dark mood.

“Living for long, long years, I hath attained the awareness of mine self. However, twas such a thin and fleeting thing. My awareness hath always, always, lived at the depths of slumber, this night, for the first time I hath ‘awakened’. Doth thine Lordship conceive this joy of mine?”
<Editor’s note: Conceive = understand in Shakespearean>

“Was the cause of your ‘awakening’, me?”

That would be probably my cheat ability to be exact.

My cheat ability, [Monster Tame], is to produce monsters in my Family.
However, it can never manipulate them like mannequins or tools of fighting power.

The monsters that became a part of my ‘Family of Monsters’, Lily and Rose, have a strong sense of self-awareness.

And so, emotions as well... ...On one hand, love. On the other, loyalty. No matter which, they hold such strong emotions towards me.

Self-awareness.

Emotions.

Those were definitely, what this White Arachne had been pining for, for the longest time.

“Most likely, the wooden thing in thine possession, also had a faint self-awareness…
...Possibly, it means that ‘Special Monsters’ hath the capacity for sprouting egos.”

“Special…”

Come to think of it, in fact, Lily was a ‘Unique Monster’ and Rose was a ‘Rare Monster’.

After knowing those facts, I had a hint of suspicion that it might have been a condition for being a part of my ‘Family of Monsters’.

It was just that I had too few samples to base my judgment on and confirm them as truth.

However, the White Arachne standing in front of me is a ‘High Monster'. As expected, monsters with special abilities was the condition.

The 'uniqueness of monsters' is also linked with their 'potential magical power'.

On the other hand, the White Arachne had said that the monsters in my ‘Family’, have the potential to gain self-awareness in the first place.

Then, possibly, the amount of magical power one has, affects the development of one gaining awareness.

Even I felt that it was a sudden, outrageous idea, but the more I thought about it, the more likely it seems.

For example, monsters like Magical Puppets, are just wooden dolls without magic.

Even corpses of once living beings can become Undead Monsters and move with magical power.

They are unable to have distinct wills like humans, but they at least hold the faint intelligence to attack other monsters. From my point of view, their movements seem to be autonomous.

Magic is an unfamiliar and mysterious power to me, but, it's possible that it might have existed fundamentally as a part of nature, from the start.

If so, the existences that we, transfer students, call 'monsters', are closer to what we call 'yokai' in Japan.

Over the years, foxes and old items who gained their own will.

Similar to monsters who accumulate magic over time.

In front of me, all of the members of my Family, Lily, Rose and the White Arachne, are classified as females; therefore, the explanation for this can be understood.

When monsters have sufficient self-awareness to accumulate magic on their own, the 'Monsters of the Family' will have a certain level of magical power without exception. Also, monsters that have large magical capacities are those who perform reproductive activities——in other words, females.

"Art miladies associated with thine Lordship?"

Dropping the shaking hand slowly, the Arachne questioned. I wanted to stop her hand at that moment, but I was unable to. Sometime while I was not paying attention, my uninjured side has been glued to the floor by the spider threads.

"...Is it about the 'path'?"

"Aah. That is, the essence of Milord's power."

Knowing my fragile resistance, the girl closed the distance in a single move and——laughed in a strange voice.

The Arachne dropped the crushed and broken belt's buckle on the belt on the floor, licked her rouge-coloured mouth and once again, stretched out her hand.

"Through the path, Miladies toucheth Master's heart. With that, they can learn of thine heart. However, if one's heart fundamentally lacks the suitable conditions in the first place, even by touching Milord's heart, naught can be conceived."

I, as the Master, and the other monsters in my 'Family of Monsters', are connected together in our hearts.

I just thought of it as a simply convenient ability. But, the Arachne said that it was the source of my power.

For example, in that cave, Lily connected to me by the path, and touched my wish. In other words, she touched my heart. It became the decisive point for Lily's humane personality.

Thus, monsters that are born in the 'Family of Monsters' are, of course, different from the normal image one would have of monsters from [Monster Tame], they are not 'domesticated'. Even if I, who is like a parent to them, the Master, who gave them their self-awareness, they willingly try to save me out of their sincere adoration, not obligation.

Technically speaking, I don't have a strong authority that can bind the girls.

The worst characteristic of my ability is being revealed in this situation right now.

"Fufufu."

Endearing——The spider laughed with the admiring of eyes of an animal inside a cage.

“Forthwith, the moment of shock I hath recieveth from discovering Milord, is something Milord will never conceive.”

The girl on the spider expanded both her hands to the sides.

“The world hath been lit, painted anew! I, indeed, doth exist hithermore!”

Her voice, directed towards me, was filled with obsession as thick and sticky like spider’s thread.
<TL Note : Really? Spider Puns?>

Facing that for the first time, even though I was much more shaken than Lily and Rose was, I suddenly realized that this White Arachne held extraordinary feelings towards myself.

Still, that girl is, a member of my ‘Family of Monsters’.

“I hath power. Might that conceeds not to any other. I shalt wield this as I will! With this ego I hath attained!”

My Family is somehow childish or more… innocent and simple in some areas.

That’s because they just gained self-awareness before they were supposed to, it’s inevitable I guess.

Furthermore, in this White Arachne’s case, there is an added obsession that has been accumulated over many years.

All of these——The desire to monopolize everything of her interest, tying them up, are boosted by the instincts of a spider. It has already gone out of hand.

“Prithee, conceive, Milord!”

“Meaning…?!”

The hand that has been stroking me, tightened around my throat at the same time.

“The value of Milord to me!”

“Ah…”

Haa, a sweet, troubling breath fanned over me.

Looking at my face filled with suffering, the girl looked on with flushed cheeks and a smile in her eyes.
<TL note: Holy crap, yandere alert!>
<Editor’s note: Sweet =D -YourSQL>

“The one who gave me ‘mine self’, was Milord. Therefore, I cannot help mine self from loving thee.”

My sight starts to flicker.

There is insufficient oxygen flowing to my brain. My consciousness starts to fade.

“I desireth all of milord.”
<TL note: crackles in laughter in the background>

Through my weak consciousness, a muddy stream of intense feelings flowed through the link.

A torrent of violent thoughts bleached my mind white.

Iit grew in intensity, blotting out my vision as colours started disappearing.

“Become mine, Milord. I shall keep thee for long.”

I feel a strong sense of loneliness.

My heart seems to be breaking into pieces.

I cannot bear it.

I am weak.

My heart is weak.

If I was alone, I wouldn't have been able to withstand this violent torrent.

"...Hither they cometh."

The White Arachne muttered softly.

In my blurry vision, I barely made out the girl who was frowning with her eyebrows.

Just as I started to doubt the Arachne's words, a dignified voice called from the other side of the white spider.

"Is that the reason why you've kidnapped Master?"

Washing away the muddy stream of emotions from the spider, a warm stream of emotions flowed into my heart.

Even I can tell.

The girls have finally arrived.

"Release that hand."

If you turned around to look, on the other side of the Arachne, there stood two silhouettes illuminated against the moonlight.

“Lily. And, Rose…”

There stood my strong-hearted comrades.

AUTHOR’S NOTES

◆ If Lily and the rest came *just* a bit later, it would have been all over.
That was dangerous!

◆ The next update will be on 1/22 (Wednesday).

17. Mortal Combat

Synopsis of the previous chapter:

Flirting with the Arachne… …*Whistles*

Chapter 17.

…They came for me.

Wielding an ax with one hand, Lily showed an intense expression towards the Arachne.

Also, the battle-ready Rose stood at the back, holding an ax at her waist.

While I was stuck from being held by my neck by the Arachne, I couldn't move my eyes away from the two figures.

It was not as if I did not believe in them, that they would not come to rescue me.
Rather, I believed that they would have definitely come chasing after me.
Still, I could not help but feel my heart being warmed by their devotion, that they would disregard their own safety to rescue me.

Just that was enough to mend my broken heart.

As expected, I am useless without those girls.
As I thought that honestly, the voice of a certain charming girl licked my ear.

"Ho. To cometh chasing hither. Ye daredevils."

Releasing her hand that was grasping my neck, the White Arachne turned around to face those girls.

Goho, *Kaho*…
<TL note: sounds of choking>

Suddenly having my windpipe released, I, who had my neck raised and tightened, choked convulsively.
Physiologically leaking tears, I fell to the floor.

And thus, I returned to myself.
The color drained from my face in one go.

“If ye squareth against me, ye shalt surely die.”

This was no place to be happy.

The White Arachne that had me imprisoned...
…was the incarnation of violence.

To rescue me means to confront this monster.
In other words, to fly into the jaws of death.

Lily and Rose are both standing side by side, facing death.
I wonder why I did not prevent this from happening.
Even though it was obvious that it was going to occur.

If I was captured, Lily would lose herself. I don’t know how much Rose would be able to calm her down, but there was a high possibility that she would throw herself into a reckless fight.

It’s wanting to challenge an opponent that you cannot win against. Fortunately, they have confirmed that I was still safe——But with this spider as an opponent, my safety cannot be guaranteed——No matter how many days of training for battle or refining of strategies, it’ll be great if they have a fail-safe plan.

It might become too late then, but it’s a million times better than attempting an operation that’ll absolutely fail.

Though I knew that the girls couldn’t have thought it that way.

Yes, I knew.
I expected that it might have turned out like this, yet I did not come up with a plan for countermeasures.
That was my mistake.

I was too naive in my expectations.
I should have placed measures in advance.

Even though there shouldn’t exist anyone that they could conveniently follow in the event of my absence…

“How pathetic.”

As I tried to hide in the background, the Arachne turned to face the two.

“Nonetheless, ‘tis not that I am unable to perceive thine affections towards Milord. ‘Tis not that I knoweth not, but… …I shan’t relent. Milord is mine alone. I shan’t be deprived of it, nor wilt I surrender it. Because I hath the power to fulfill it.”

Obsession that was as sticky as spider threads spilled from the mouth of the girl.

“Begone, petty worms.”

“The one who is trivial, is you!”

Looking at the dark scene of despair in front of me, however, at that time, I saw something I did not expect.

Facing a mass of killing intent so strong that it froze my blood cold, Lily remained dignified.
In her demeanor, there was no fear shown in challenging a monster that was far higher ranked than she.

Watching her figure, I suddenly realized my mistake.

Lily hasn’t lost her calm.
Through the path that connects us, her heart remembers her anger, but she is more composed than I thought.

She did not simply jump into this situation with her feelings leading her. I can see that the demeanor she is showing now is one after she has resolved herself in something.

I wonder what happened. It doesn’t seem like her… ...Well, I might be saying too much, but I still can’t get rid of my discomfort.

Could it be that perhaps, she had thought through it properly before coming here?
Was there even a chance of success?

But, how?

Of course, I trust her more than anyone else.
…I trust her, but this and that are different things. It was within my expectations to see a scene in which they would be all over the place.

“I am trivial? Well said, young lass.”
<TL note: In case you can’t tell… that was sarcasm. -Blesser>

As though to mock my confidence, the White Arachne released a huge amount of intense killing intent.
Even I, who cannot feel such a thing as magic, felt the extraordinary power and threat on my skin.

Even in this open-air nest of the Arachne where there were no walls, I felt difficulties in breathing due to the intense pressure.

As expected, it's no good.

Lily. Rose.
They are going to be killed by the existence right in front of me.

“Both of you, forget about me and run!”

Even though I knew it was useless, I still couldn't help but raise my voice.

"Ye shalt not escape."

The Arachne's voice was filled with killing intent.
It was impossible for her to let Lily and the others to get away at this point of time.

“Thou hath called this dearest wish of mine naught but a trifling matter. I shall weigh thy courage…”
<TL note: Spoken like a true boss.>

The huge body of the white spider crouched low.

"Thou shalt becometh mine food!"

Like a contracted spring released from pressure.
It won't stop. It can't be stopped anymore.
The massacre begins.

Just before that.

“It’s okay, Master.”

I saw Lily’s smile.

* * *

The spider jumped.

Similar to a boat on a stormy day, the nest rocked greatly.

"Shaaaaaah!"

Leaping with six legs, it was almost the equivalent of a bombardment.

Just in those few seconds, Lily and the White Arachne closed the distance of ten meters between them, to zero.
The fearsome power of its jump was the same as the last time I saw it.

From what I saw, it was too late to react and respond in time to those movements.
For example, Rose, who went down in a single strike a while ago, was the same.

That was why I wasn't wrong in thinking that Lily and the others had planned their moves beforehand.

"Shiiing—i!"

…Matching the timing, Rose, who was behind Lily, swung her ax that she had readied at her waist.
At the same time, Lily threw herself directly to the ground without considering the consequences.

As a result, the wooden ax passed through in the space where Lily's body had been occupying just an instant before with a buzz.

"!?"

The White Arachne had targeted Lily when it had leaped into the air.
She had probably meant to kill the imprudent lass that yelled in one shot with one of her spider legs.

Yet, the target in front of her eyes disappeared suddenly, causing her to slightly hesitate in confusion.
No matter what monster it was, they wouldn’t be able to counteract immediately, no to mention that it was a full-power charge.

The attack of the spider’s leg only cut some of Lily’s flaxen hair and ended there.
And then, the spider who had directly charged towards her target, Lily, got hit by the swinging

blade of the ax itself instead.

The provocative words of Lily were used to create this situation.

Collision.

Even though it was of a wooden make, the battleax that Rose was holding was a weapon that held magical power.
With a blade of hardness exceeding iron, combined with the physical strength of a monster, the destructive power of the ax that was swung was not something to laugh at.

With a destructive clash, the ax was buried in the cephalothorax* of the spider.
<TL note: Cephalothorax: anterior part of the body in certain arachnids and crustaceans, consisting of the coalesced head and thorax. Thanks dictionary.reference.com>*
The blade of the ax Rose swung shredded the white hair of the spider, broke through the tough skin and sank into the tenacious muscles, causing a small spurt of blood.

However, before the strike could achieve a critical hit, the ax itself couldn't withstand the impact and shattered.

"Giih!?"

In speed and tenacity, above all, in weight, Rose lost.

The huge body of white that attacked, passed by Rose, slightly grazing her.
Rose was clearly *not* in the path of the spider's charge.

Yet, Rose's body seemed was repelled away, akin to a spinning top that was hit.

The hand that was holding the ax by her side which originally looked as though it was about to be break from its socket, was sent flying, the human doll spun round and round, slamming into the mess of logs on the floor with a clash and bounced once before stopping.

"Shaaaaaa!"

The white spider landed on eight legs, then readied herself to jump after and deliver the killing blow towards Rose, who was in mid-air.

"I won't let you—!"

A yell rang out.
Lily, who was waiting in ambush on the ground, took the chance and released the magic she had

been preparing.

Third-ranked wind magic, manifesting thirty-seven pieces of blades.
Although this is one of her prized techniques, the power is somewhat lower than usual, as that portion of power was converted to expanding the range of distance covered by it.

A raging wind blew with great violence.
Illuminations that were hanging from spider threads were sent flying and the floorboards that consisted of thin logs gave out creaking sounds and flew upwards.

With this, even a 'High Monster' should receive damage from it. Even I, who was looking at it from a distance, thought that it was casted with impeccable timing.

"An attack of such a level!"

However, the White Arachne instead escaped the effective range of Lily's attack magic with normally impossible actions.

Just an instant before Lily's attack magic was activated, the White Arachne paused its attack on Rose and shot out a spider thread, latching onto one of the trees.

With monstrous strength that could uproot a tree, the huge body of the spider disappeared from my sight.

"——There!"

Perhaps she didn't lose sight of the enemy since her scream of kiai rang out—as expected of Lily!
<TL note: Those who have know/watched martial arts know that 'kiai' is when that punctuate their strikes with a loud exclamation>

"Ye fools!"

An odd sound of breaking was heard.
By the time I focused my gaze, one of the Arachne's spider legs had already been cut off.
She who was in the air aimed and attacked suddenly, breaking Lily's spear in two and causing it to fly off somewhere near the ceiling.

"Ugh..."

Lily's forearms were torn to shreds as they were each turned in impossible directions; she became a defenseless figure, unable to defend herself.

The White Arachne would never let such an opportunity pass. It approached Lily as she was lying on the ground, then aligned her fingers together and poised to strike directly at Lily's face with a knifehand.
<TL note: Knifehand is a hand positioning technique in Karate for various chopping/thrusting strikes where you straighten your fingers together and curl your thumb in, the pose resembles a knife, hence the naming.>

Was it impossible after all? I thought, even as I prayed for the victory of Lily and the others.

"I'm not... done yet!"

In the next moment, from the opposite side of the Arachne where Lily had approached, Rose attacked.

"Wha!?"

Lily's wind magic had scattered about many timbers that the Arachne's nest was made from.
Hiding in one of its shadows, Rose rushed in from the blind spot of the Arachne.

The two sisters in my Family, who are connected by bond, executed waves of attacks and created a small moment of opening.

"Shiiiiing—!"

Taking out the spare ax she had been carrying with her remaining arm, Rose gripped it and readied to attack, striking the blade of the ax into the side of the White Arachne.

"Kuu..."

One of the spider legs was cut and blown away, dancing in the air.
However, Rose's ax did not deal a fatal blow.
Even when it was simultaneously attacking and defending itself, the White Arachne showed that it could protect itself.

The satisfactory attack that was dealt had only taken one of the eight spider legs that was sacrificed in its defense instead.
Even so, an injury is an injury.
In fact, Rose's attack perhaps only deeply wounded the White Arachne's pride as it was injured by a monster of a lower level.

"Guh..."

The face of the girl on the Arachne twisted with hatred.

“You… Wench!”
"Gii!?"

Rose, who was in a posture after swinging her ax, could not dodge the spider leg that was suddenly thrust out like the tip of a spear.

Rose, who took the attack straight on, flew backwards in a horizontal line, stopping only after breaking two of the wooden pillars of the Arachne’s nest.
The ceiling, which was supported by many trees, made a creaking sound and tilted to the side.

This time, Rose did not move.

Lily had both arms broken whilst Rose had lost an arm and was down.
At this point, it seemed that fight has already been decided.

At least, that was what the White Arachne would have thought.

And that, was the only chance of victory Lily and the others had been looking for.

Lily’s eyes shined brightly.
Lily opened her mouth towards the Arachne who was at a close distance.

“GaaAah!”

From the depths of her mouth, red flames roared out.
It was the mimicked flame-emission ability of a Fire Fang.

“Umph!?”

Even the Arachne could not avoid this.

The pure red flames engulfed the face of the white girl straight on.

“You did it… ...Ah?”

I was enthusiastic for one moment but my spine was frozen in the next.

It was because I witnessed Lily’s body being entangled in spider threads.

From the shoulder to the area near chest and left arm, to the right side of the body along with her foot.

The sight of her body being caked in spider threads was strongly burned into the retinas of my eyes.

My eyes were shown the embroidment of despair that stole even the little hope I had.

“Wha-… what...?”

Bending backwards, the Arachne murmured in a low voice.

“What did thee dare trieth? Insolent worm!”

One of the eight spider legs held one end of the spider threads entangling Lily.
The other end was firmly grasped in the hand of the white girl.

The Arachne roared with anger while simultaneously using the overwhelming strength of a ‘High Monster’, pulled on the spider thread.
What this will result in… Even a kid can understand.

To visualize, imagine a vinyl doll for young girls.
What would happen if one grabbed and held onto a leg and strongly pulled the arm with all of one’s strength.

With ripping sounds, the jersey Lily was wearing, her left arm, as well as a part of the left upper half of her body, were pulled apart.

”Aa.”

Lily muttered as her body was being destroyed, losing her core.

Just like a puppet with its strings cut, the body of a young girl fell face-down.
And thus, the movements on this side, as well, stopped.

“As expected... that earlier attack gave me quite a shock.”

The consciousness of Lily felt through our path became very weak.
Perhaps feeling the same thing, a gruesome smile floated on the bewitching face of the White Arachne.

“However, with ‘tis, it’s the end.”

Slight traces of blisters could be seen along the side of the girl’s face, which belonged to the upper

half of the Arachne.
But, that was all.

“Ku… kkuku, kukukukukuu.”

The flashy laugh of the girl was, without a doubt, the laughter of a demon.

“Truly foolish ones. Even though ye hath not known a chance to stand against me.”
It is just as she says. Reasonably speaking, this was quite an expected result.
This is an obvious result of an obvious situation. I could only watch on like a fool to this world’s cruelty.

“Blame not me, but curse thine weakness of thyself. If thou hadst strength, then this would not have ended with thine deaths.”

The White Arachne boasted in triumph.
Said with pity, the mockery in the lines is evident.

“Farewell.”

She lifted one of her spider’s legs directly above the fallen body of Lily.
With the intention to deal the final blow.

There is no one else to stop the White Arachne.

“There seems to be quite a sad misunderstanding.”

Yes, that was the case.

“Kato-san…?”

I doubted my own ears.
Even after looking at the figure with my own eyes, I couldn’t believe it.

But, the one stepping into the Arachne’s nest was definitely Kato-san.

The fact that she is in this place, itself, is not a strange thing. Presumably, she came along with Lily and Rose. Then hid herself outside the Arachne’s nest.

But, why did she show herself in this place?
This is a battlefield.
This was not the place for a girl who did not possess any powers to step in. Kato-san should have

known that as well.

“What?”

The White Arachne probably thought the same thing, and looked at Kato-san with eyes filled with suspicion.

“A misunderstanding? What art thou speaking of?”

Some discomfort and large amount of puzzlement.
Also, curiosity.

From the White Arachne’s eyes that were as red as blood, I could see bustling feelings travelling back and forth within.

“In the first place, wherefore doth a human the likes of *thee* standeth before me? Doth thee wish for thine early departure?”

It was actually quite natural for the White Arachne to say that.
She could kill Kato-san at any moment, and would probably not hesitate to do so.

However, there was not an ounce of concern that could be seen from Kato-san’s form.
It could not be helped that White Arachne brutally referred to it as a ‘suicide wish’, but Kato-san, who was confronted, shook her head to deny it.

“If I had wanted to commit suicide, I would not have gone through the trouble to move my corpse all the way here or the like, right? The reason why I came out here nonchalantly… ...Well, one of them was because I wanted to voice my complaint.”

If you want to kill me, just do it.
Carrying that kind of gallant attitude, Kato-san confronted the white monster alone.

“…Now that I think back on it, Lily-san was the same as well. What is there to be ‘jealous’ of? Even if the grass looks greener on the other side, don’t you think that it’s too cruel? Speaking of ‘jealousy’, I should be the one saying that.”

With a grim expression, her words were clearly filled with indignation.

“You are the same as well. What I absolutely cannot attain, you do not realize is within your grasp. Isn’t it obvious that I want to at least complain about it?”

I couldn’t understand what she was talking about.

The same can probably be said of the White Arachne. Faint creases appeared between her eyebrows and she was silent for several seconds.

She was probably thinking about what Kato-san meant.
In the end, perhaps she couldn't understand it, the White Arachne quickly gave up trying.

"…Cease your gibbering, lass."

Saying that, the White Arachne swept her hands to her sides.
Using speed exceeding what was possible for a human to react to, she caught the neck of Kato-san with a thread.

"Cease this talk of blathering. Doth thee not understandeth thine place? Knoweth not I can vanquish thee at will?"

If the Arachne had just tightened the hold on her neck a little more, it would have plucked the life of the young girl.
Even this was unable to silence the mouth of Kato-san.

"Ah. Right, one more thing, I had another aim as well."

Or so it seems, there was no such thing.

Without fear towards the one who is holding her life in its hands, Kato-san continued speaking to the White Arachne.

"Rose-san said 'a miracle was needed even if she had to bet her life on the fight'. But aren't miracles things that don't happen that easily? Reality is always cruel. But, I will not bow down to that cruelness. That's why, I betted another life apart from Rose-san and Lily-san."
"Thou, wherefore…?"
<TL Note: 'wherefore' = why in Shakespearean>
"Do you not understand?"

Kato-san distorted the ends of her mouth.

"I'm saying that I've bought enough time for now."

At that time, the situation had already been decided.

"Right, Lily-san?"

“…No matter what, haven’t you crossed too far into the danger zone?” <editor note>

There was an transparent ‘hand’ that firmly grabbed the bottom of the jaw of the white girl atop the spider, melting it into mush.

“But, thanks for helping.”

The somewhat unclear voice of Lily echoed throughout the Arachne’s nest.

“White Arachne-san. The fact that you didn’t know that I was a Slime, was our only chance of victory.”

The body of the White Arachne, was now enclosed in the Lily’s Slime body.

“You didn’t notice my pretence of being dead? It’s actually my special technique…”

As what Lily said, it was her trump card, her unique ability, 『Mimicry』.
I had known this.

That’s why, I knew there was ‘no such thing’.

“…or not, hahaha, I bluffed a little too much, perhaps. I was seriously about to die. My consciousness was knocked out as well… It would have been dangerous if Kato-san didn’t buy some time for me.”

As Lily had said herself, if Kato didn’t buy time, the situation would have been different.
The naked upper half of Lily’s body appeared from her Slime body, sticking to the front of the spider’s body; more than half of it was a transparent semi-liquid slime with a vague silhouette.

It was not that she purposely chose to stay in that form, but that she couldn’t construct a proper body.
That was a given. Her body was torn into pieces. Although Slimes have a simple structure and a tenacious life force, they are not invulnerable. Rather than pretending to be dead she had suffered enough damage to be dead.

However, she couldn’t not do it.

A one-time, hidden trump card that can only be used in critical situations.
That’s why, she didn’t just get done in, to a certain extent, she had to really taste death after being defeated. That’s why it gave a certain sense of achievement to the White Arachne, and gave birth to a big opportunity.

“With this, you can’t escape.”

The magic circle that she placed when she was lying down was filled with magical energy and began to glow.

The frozen Arachne immediately tried to tear apart Lily’s arm.

The girl tried to grip Lily with both her arms.
But at the next instant, a flying ax determinedly beat the Arachne’s arms away.

It was Rose’s assistance.
It wasn’t just for Lily’s sake that time was bought. Rose also, in the short amount of time, barely completed preparations to back up her sister as much as possible.

Although the ax that was thrown was unable to cut through the arm of the awfully resilient body of a ‘High Monster’, it caused the aim of the arm targeting Lily’s hand to go awry, raking the air instead.

It was just an opening of barely a single second.
However, that was sufficient.

Wind magic with the nature of a bullet exploded in the face of the White Arachne.

“Gu, gaah!?”

Lily, whose body was stuck together with the spider’s, was sent flying to the floor from the recoil.
On the other side, the body of the Arachne, which could be thought of as rock-solid, swayed.

“Oh, oh, oooh…”

The spider swayed on its seven legs.
The girl’s upper half swayed from side to side like a pendulum.

“Ooooh…”

However, it was only that.
The shocking thing was that the White Arachne was able to endure the magic that was fired at zero distance.

“Th-… this… ...no matter how many times, how many times you try… ...Annoying…!”

Lily's magic attack didn't have the time to charge fully and was probably not at full power.
Still, receiving a magic attack at such a close distance and not breaking her neck, was probably because of her aberrant strength and the reason why its face didn't get crushed.

Lily was only given those few moments of disorientation.

However, just in the small opening that was created, Lily and Rose fulfilled their goal.
In other words.

"Lily! Rose!"
""Master!""

They had impressively arrived at my side, alive.

~ AUTHOR'S NOTES ~

◆…The update was later than expected. I am deeply sorry.
<TL note: We're deeply sorry as well! Running low on spunky grammar Nazis. WE NEEDZ EDITORS PWEASE VID KOOKIEZ, ORZ.>
…I couldn't go back home.

◆While I was writing the scene of the ax breaking, it brought to mind the Dai's Crocodine.
Thinking back on it, the 'Void Ax' seems to get broken quite frequently, huh.
<TL's Note: Dai as in 'Dragon Quest: Dai no Daibouken'. Crocodine wielded the 'Void Ax' -Blesserz>

◆The next update will be on 1/25 (Saturday).
<TL note: Our next update will be on 31/03/2015 or 01/04/2015>

18. Happiness of the Family

Synopsis of the previous chapter:

The final battle of the first volume.

Chapter 18.

“Lily! Rose!”

“Master!!”

I caught the two ‘Monsters of my Family’ that came flying into me from the front.

To be exact, it could be said that I was ‘pushed down’.

My hands were still glued to the floor and, without being able to move my body, I could only remain hugged by them as I fell on my bottom.

“I’m sooo relieved that you’re fine…”

”We have been worried, Master.”

The two of them clung to my chest, ecstatic at our reunion.

Of course, I was happy. However, it didn’t just stop at that.

“O-ouch! T-the both of you, please calm down a littl-.”

”Ah, yes. Master, you weren’t injured, were you?”

When I shouted out in pain, Lily immediately activated her recovery magic for me.
In the meantime, Rose freed me, cutting my binds of spider threads with a small knife that was hanging from her waist.

“Sorry. We were just too happy. So…”
”Nah. Don’t mind it.”

It just meant that they were that worried about me.
Just by knowing that, my heart warmed up, and even my pain didn’t bother me that much anymore.

My body feels bubbly and warm.
It was because my injured body was healed with recovery magic.
That said, it still took several minutes before I was able to move.

That was the limit of Lily’s recovery magic. I can’t complain about it.
Besides, it was not like I was in a situation where I can whine about my injuries.

Both Lily and Rose, were in a really appalling state.

Due to receiving a large amount of damage, Lily’s mimicry ability was affected. The majority of her body and half of her face melted and returned to that of a Slime. Thanks to that, she wasn’t completely nude, so it wasn’t lewd, but it was still a ghastly sight.
Even the hand gently touching my broken right arm was completely transparent; not even a finger could be discerned from it.
…Occasionally falling, her body fluids dripped onto my arm and flowed down. Because she

could barely maintain her human form currently, I could see that she was at her limits.

Speaking of Rose—she lost an arm. When she was thrown against the pillars and floors numerous times, one of her leg joints seems to have been hurt as she had been dragging her foot behind her when she came running over.

The worst injury was probably the crack running through the torso. It was probably from the sudden, last kick of that spider leg while she barely avoided taking a direct hit, she seemed to have been hit in the side instead; a deep radial crack ran from her shoulder.

It was indeed a body riddled with wounds.
If anything went wrong, it wouldn't be wrong to say that their lives would have been forfeit.

Even so, the both of them came to rescue me.

"Thank you. The both of you. I'm really thankful…"

Other than these words, I had no better words to express my feelings.

…If it had ended like this, it would unmistakably be the ideal 'happy ending'.
The reason why it wasn't was because reality was cruel.

"Wherefore… do ye rejoice?"

A voice of resentment called out towards us who were being joyous.
When it raised its head, we were met with a pair of scarlet eyes, full of fury.

The White Arachne, who was of great health, glared at us.

“With such trifling wounds, didst ye thinketh that ye hath prevailed against me?”

The White Arachne who said this in a low, threatening voice, didn’t seem to have taken any damage against Lily’s magic at all.
What was more shocking was that the blisters on its face that were there moments ago were nowhere to be seen. It seems that ‘High Monsters’ were monsters with high recovery abilities.

Compared to that, it was clear that on our side, Lily and Rose are no longer in a state to fight. Just for the sake of arriving at my side alive, they have already spent all that they had. They did not even have a fragment of strength left to fight.

In other words, this was the end for us here.

I was unbelievably calm, taking the despairing situation in stride.

The reason? It’s obvious enough without bothering to search for it.
If I am to perish here with Lily and Rose, I thought that it’s not that bad after all.

On that matter, just the two of them embracing me granted me such a feeling of peace.

Compared to a solitarily life spent trapped in these spider threads, it was definitely much better to die here with Lily and Rose.
I spontaneously thought so.

Besides possessing me, I doubt that the White Arachne’s aim will include killing me... If it comes to that, I can only bite off my tongue.
<TL note: If you didn’t get it, he just said that he’d rather die than live on alone without them. -Blesser>

“Wait, Master”

Just as I determined myself to do that, Lily's hand in liquid form enveloped mine.

"Lily?"

"It's still too early to give up."

Lily shouted out.

What did she mean?

The current situation was clearly a ‘checkmate’. No matter how you think about it, it’s impossible for them to physically turn the tables around from this point.

Even though that should be the case, Lily, who only had half of her face left, showed an expression full of confidence towards the White Arachne that started to approach.

“Soon, I shall shatter that body of thine, and retrieve that which is mine.”

With sharp clinking sounds produced by its spider legs, the White Arachne drew near.

The reason why it did not use its fully-charged and fearsome jumping power to strike, was probably because she didn’t want me to get caught up in it. She was certainly still intending to finish off Lily and Rose once and for all.

“Ye hath struggled and toiled in vain. It is I who shall be the victor.”

"What are meaningless, are your actions, aren’t they?"

The person that replied with those words was Kato-san, who appeared in the space between

us and the Arachne.

She was the same as Lily; they had still not given up.

As I looked in that direction, I locked eyes with Kato-san, and just for a little, a broad smile was seen.

It was a natural smile.

As though she was happy from the depths of her heart that I was fine.

“…”

It appeared just for an instant.

Kato-san immediately put away that smile and turned a steely gaze towards the White Arachne.

"Going on a rampage and throwing a tantrum... So, did you get what you wished for, White Arachne-san?"

“I shall soon snatcheth it back. Silence, wench!”

"Snatch it back? You sure say some funny things. Surely, something like that is impossible for you?"

“What didst thou say?”

Perhaps not allowing those outrageous words escape, the White Arachne turned towards Kato-san’s direction.

"Art thou addled? Look! Strength hath they all spent. This will be their deathbed."

Even though a killing intent that would have crushed a timid person was turned against her,

Kato-san remained calm.

"Well, that might be the case."

After Kato-san immediately affirmed the words of the White Arachne she shook her head.

"However, this and that are different matters. Upon killing Lily-san and the others here, you will never again attain what you have wished for, you know. ...Rather, you have never once attained what you wished for."
"Haven't you realized it yet?"

In place of Kato-san, this time, Lily spoke out instead.

"You have been mistaken all this time."

I couldn't understand what those girls were saying.
Well, I think the same can be said of the White Arachne.

At least, until that moment.

“Mistaken, thou sayeth? What...”

The words that the White Arachne was about to say, stopped unnaturally.
I didn't know what Lily did, but the White Arachne cut off its words and fully widened its eyes.

Reflected in her scarlet eyes were me, her Master, and the two other ‘Monsters of my Family’, nestled against me.

Lily sat, softly placing her hand upon my arm. The area around my shoulder was covered with her flaxen hair as she nestled even closer against me.
And my other hand was being gripped by Rose's doll hand.

At the sight of the two ‘Monsters of my Family’, the White Arachne looked on with a frozen expression.

Looking at that frozen expression on the Arachne's face, Lily spoke.

“...It seems that you have finally noticed. Then you should understand, what I meant by you misunderstanding.”

Half of her face had reverted to that of a Slime and an unhealthy expression was on her face.

“Having your own will? Attaining an ego? Those are certainly good things. Yes. Even I can remember those. That instant, when colours manifested in my world.”

Those were the same things that the White Arachne had talked about.
Originally, monsters do not possess self-awareness. In that case, the moment they attained it, they should have shared in the irreplaceable vivid experience that was as what my Family have felt.

“Master has bestowed awareness unto us. Master is like a ‘mother’ to us in human terms——No. He is a special existence, something above that. Well, it’s not as if I cannot understand your desire to monopolize and kidnap him.”

All three Monsters of my Family have different stances regarding me as their Master, but they

all share a common point.
Just like how Lily gave the metaphor of a mother, each of them hold special emotions towards me, this should also be the same for the Arachne who abducted me. Rather, it was precisely because she held such feelings that she went to the extreme actions of abducting and confining me.

“However, there’s no point in only keeping Master to yourself. You were mistaken in that area.”
Lily, who was holding my hand, squeezed it.

“We hold Master in the highest regard and importance. Master as well, cares deeply for us. I believe that this is an insurmountable and irreplaceable happiness.”

With a body so transparent that it didn’t have a shadow, Lily placed her hand on her broken chest, yet she had an extremely contented look.
She wordless expressed that she bore her wounds with pride.

Lily is in a state of blissfulness.
The same can be said of Rose who was glued to my side.
I, who was with the two of them, was the same as well.

This was the situation that everyone had bet their lives on creating.

“Hey, this happiness of ours… you can feel it conveyed to you as well, right?”

My Family and I are connected heart to heart through the path between us.
That of course, is no exception for the White Arachne.

It’s too hard to to glean complex pieces of information by transmitting through the path. But, on the other hand, it’s possible to convey what cannot be conveyed in words.

We can directly convey to each other feelings and things that even a thousand words cannot express.

In other words, the emotions that Lily, Rose and I are feeling right now, can be completely and transparently transmitted to the White Arachne.

For example, the sense of fulfilment from working hard for sake of your loved ones.
For example, the joy of loving, and the joy of being loved.
That which cannot be attained alone, the real meaning of insurmountable bliss.

And so, all of these were to become a clobbering hammer, a piercing spear, against the White Arachne.
That’s because she is also a ‘Monster in my Family’.

Originally, she should have existed together with us as a ‘Monster of the Family’, as well as a beloved comrade.
Then, she would have obtained the same ‘unsolitary bliss’ that I am feeling right now.

However, she can no longer obtain it.
Even if she could not obtain happiness, she had never considered it as an issue.
It was because she did not know what true happiness was, until now.

She did not know and became unreasonable.

However, through the path connecting our hearts, it was possible to directly transmit the feelings of bliss that she has never experienced before to her.

Thus, the White Arachne came to know of bliss.
Something that felt as though it was unrelated to her.

After knowing that this was the highest form of bliss, she understood that it was something that she could never attain by herself, nor experience again with her own strength.

If her heart *still* did not break under this, the White Arachne would truly be a monster in the real sense.
<TL note: As in an unfeeling beast. -Blesser>

“Uuu, ah…”

Yet, that shouldn’t be the case.
She, who had just received a heart, was purer than anyone; is just like a newborn child. The one who gifted her a heart was me, who is only an ordinary man.

In a certain sense, this was ironic.
If only she did not attain the heart she had been constantly longing for, she would have remained an invulnerable existence against such hurts.

“I, I… I was…”

No matter how how hard the exterior is, no one can withstand stabs against the soft, inner layer.

Thus, the violent white spider that had been unrivaled broke down.

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* * *

“It’s good that you’re alright, senpai.”

“Thanks.”

With Lily' recovery magic, Kato-san was able to walk for now, she neared me and welcomed me back with a slight smile.

Everyone were unsteady on their feet, but Kato-san, who didn’t even fight, had an unhealthy complexion, it was probably from feeling too much tension.

“Was Kato-san the one who came up with the strategy?”

I asked the question that has been bugging me.

Even though I don't have conclusive evidence, I felt that that methodology of doing things wasn't Lily's or Rose's style.
Putting aside that I was saved, I thought that her expression is a little… But it would be too rude to say it out loud.

That level of thinking cannot possibly come from my ‘Family of Monsters’, who were simple creatures.
It is a human concept.
Sure enough, Kato-san nodded.

"I don't know what reason why that spider kidnapped Mashima-senpai. However, I understood something from the fact that it had taken senpai away."

“That she was obsessed with me?“

“Yes. At the very least, I understood that senpai is a special existence to her. And so. even when she created a mess, I deduced that she could be a part of senpai’s Family. If she’s a part of senpai's Family, she should have the same kind of origin similar to Lily-san and Rose-san. In that case, I thought that there was a way to exploit it.”

“No matter what kind of intention she had when she kidnapped me, that has nothing to do with it."

"Yes. Towards senpai, who was the Master, being believed in, trusted in, replied on and loved by... Those are things that bring happiness, aren't they?"

“…I wonder if that's true?”

“It is.”

Kato-san showed an extremely lonely smile.

“Lily-san and Rose-san wanted to arrive at Mashima-senpai’s side alive. Those were the conditions for victory.“

Before I said anything, Kato-san retracted her smile and continued speaking.

“Those were quite the difficult conditions, but those two fulfilled it splendidly.”

The strategy was for Lily and Rose to bet their lives challenging the Arachne, while doing that, whomever that survives was to arrive by my side by any means.

Against an opponent that you don't have any methods of winning in combat, this was the only

way.

“After that, all that's left is to tell that White Arachne of her situation. ...However, to do so requires us to draw her into conversation with us. This was my responsibility. She was extremely strong, and I, was extremely weak. If such an opponent walked out nonchalantly, her interest would be piqued. Besides, since I can be killed anytime, killing me then and later would have been the same. In that sense, I was the best candidate for this job."

“Even so, it wasn’t as if there was no danger to your life.“

More importantly, the White Arachne could have decided to kill her indiscriminately on a whim, she was really walking on a tightrope with her life at stake.
“Besides, didn’t you come out once before that as well? While we were in the midst of fighting.“

Lily cut in while Kato-san shrugged.

“To move in order to create an opening, well, that was ad-libbing. It would have become an impossible situation otherwise.“
“That was too reckless. I thought that my heart was going to stop.“
“Doesn’t Lily-san not have a heart right now?“
“Aren’t the two of you starting to get along pretty well while I was not around?“

Interjecting between those two who were bantering, the slight traces of a bitter smile could be seen on Kato-san while Lily showed an uncomfortable face. It seems that something happened between the two of them after all. I was curious but I'll ask about the details later.

"Still, that was a strategy that makes me break out in cold sweat just hearing about it."

When I murmured that, Kato-san tilted her head.

"Really?"

"Yeah. If the discussion didn't go well, in the worst case, there was the possibility of the White Arachne arriving at a completely different reasoning from the other ‘Monsters of the Family’, right?"

"Ah. That's certainly true."

Perhaps Kato-san had already considered that possibility as well, she expressed agreement with my opinion.

"It was a gamble we took. Well, because there were no other solutions, we simply had to do it... However. I thought that it was a bet that didn’t have bad chances.”

“Is that so?”

“Yes. Because I know Lily-san and Rose-san.”

Kato-san glanced over at Lily who was completely glued to my back.

"For example, Lily-san has a side of her that is highly skeptical…"

“Ahh, wait, Kato-san!?”

“...And that Rose-san is a serious person.”

Kato-san easily ignored Lily's protest.

Looking at this hierarchical back-and-forth banter, I inferred that something had happened while I was away. I wonder what had really happened.

I'm worried about it after all, Making a note to ask the details from Rose later, I prompted Kato-san to continue the story for now.

"It's certainly probable that it’s just as what Kato-san has said. So, what was it about the characters of these two?"

”I have been thinking about it, and this is just my hypothesis but somewhere, a part of senpai's Family is affected by senpai's character.”

Kato-san's reply caught me off guard.

"Me?"

"Yes. From what I heard, before meeting senpai, the ‘Monsters in the Family’ did not originally possess a heart. In that case, it wouldn't be that strange if there was such a side to it, would it?"

As I listened to Kato-san, I recalled the conversation I had with the White Arachne regarding the power I held.

The seeds of awareness started to sprout because my Family came in contact my heart,
Of course, that should have influenced them greatly. Even if a part of their character shows that, it wouldn't be a strange matter at all.

”That’s why I thought that even that white spider's heart shouldn't be in Since she is also a part of senpai's Family after all."

Without thinking, just as I was about to leave the Arachne's nest, I turned around.

In the middle of that huge space, the spider sat with its legs folded.

The girl with a spider's body hung its head in shame.

With her long, white hair covered her face, completely hiding her expression from view.

She no longer had the energy to stand against us, those feelings were transmitted through the path.

What was there, was only a pitiful life form that felt everything that should have been in her hands fall away, waiting to waste away alone.

She had been alone.
Since then and even until now.
Most likely, from now on as well.

"..."

In this open-aired space that was without walls, somehow I suddenly felt as though I was enclosed, shut into a deep cavern.

"Master?"

Perhaps realizing that something was off with me, Lily called out.

"Lily."

I also called out her name.

That was the only thing I did. Yet, with just that, Lily seemed to have noticed something and opened one of her eyes on her half-broken face.

She let out a small sigh, disturbing the air.

"Master, you're really..."

"My bad, The one who injured you guys is..."

"It's okay. I like this aspect of Master as well."

Lily let out a wry smile that seemed to say: it couldn't be helped.

With a smile on a half-broken face, it was the smile of a monster.

However, to me, I thought that it was a smile more beautiful than any goddess'.

"Just like how Master likes my imperfect form, I too, love that sweet side of Master. That's why, it's okay. Master should just do whatever Master likes."

Saying that, Lily gently left my side.

I approached the spider who broke down, wanting to give her some encouragement.

"Master? What are you..."

"Senpai?"

Rose and Kato-san still didn't seem to understand.

Well, they probably wouldn't understand. Even I, myself, think that it's a foolish thing to do.

"Hey..."

The girl that was growing on the spider jerked in shock.

Her silky hair swayed, revealing her crimson eyes as she looked up at me.

Just from looking into her eyes, it can be seen that she had lived far longer than me. However, looking at her current figure, she only looks like a child to me.

"Do you wanna come along as well?"

The Arachne's crimson eyes widened.

Also, those behind me started to show signs of panic.

"Master!? What are you speaking of?!”

"Y-yeah! Senpai!"

Rose and Kato-san pretty taken aback, but the one who was most shocked, was probably the White Arachne in front of me.

“Do thee… jest? Milord."

"We are connected by the path, so you should know."

“... It doth appear so.”

The white girl looked at me with disbelieving eyes.

“I have assaulted thee, Milord.”

"Yeah, that's right."

“And… wounded thee greatly.”

"That’s just as you’ve said as well."

Putting aside my wounds, the inflicting of Lily's and Rose's heavy wounds were, frankly, more aggravating to me.

"But thinking about it, your awareness should have been awakened by coming into contact with my heart."

Waking up the seeds of awareness that was originally virtually non-existent inside a monster by coming into contact with my heart. That was what my ability, [Monster Tame], does as said by the White Arachne.

When they come in contact with my heart, the girls in my Family receive my wishes.
Lily who saved me from drowning in my despair.
Rose who protects me as I resolved to survive in this alternate world.

The spider in front of me should not be an exception.
This one had also touched my heart and should have received my wish.

And so, looking back on it, there was indeed an occasion that came to mind.

——“I hath power. Might that concedes not to any other. I shall wield this as I will! With this ego I hath attained!”

Those were the words of the White Arachne.
Recalling such an arrogant exclamation, it left a bitter taste in my mouth when I thought of it.

Ever since I came into this alternate world, I've experienced things that could have distorted my perception.
The day the Colony collapsed, I’ve been hurt, and had thoughts that crushed my sense of values I’ve had until now.

I was wandering alone in the dangerous forest for three whole days, I had also almost died in solitude.
Besides that, there was the latest incident with Kaga, where I committed an act I never wanted to associate myself with; I dirtied my hands killing a human.

In any case, if only I had overwhelming power to overcome these harsh conditions, I could have escaped these situations.

——If only I had strength.
Even I, am human. If I said that I didn’t think that way, I'd be lying.

Thinking this way was an extremely dangerous thing.
That's because, this way of thinking will eventually lead to arrogance like: 'If I have strength, I can do anything'.
The White Arachne in front of me is such an example.

I’m sure that that desire for strength has always been buried somewhere deep within my heart.
Tonight, this white bundle of violence has taken its form and bared its fangs.

"The one who granted you a heart, was me. So, a part of the responsibility of you running amok belongs me as well. It’s unreasonable for me to put the entire blame on you for that."
"Amok I ran, of my own intentions, I have done. Dictated by the spider instincts within."
"Even so, the one who triggered that, was my wish. It doesn't take away my responsibility."
“...Truly, thou art far too magnanimous a man, Milord.”

The White Arachne was dumbfounded.

“Doest thou comprehend, Milord? Thine thoughts art too precarious. If thou shalt shoulder e’ery burden that accompanies the winds, Milord will surely crumble.”

"He will not."

The one who answered this was Lily.

"We will support Master so that he doesn’t. It is for that sake that we are here."

Her semi-liquid lower body flowed over here and piled up beside me to stand.

"What about you? Would you support Master together with us?"

"Woe is me... ...For I am not worthy."

The White Arachne shook her head.

“I have wounded ye with my selfishness.”

Anyone who sees her depressed form, will understand that it was not as though she did not want to come with us.

I can see that her heart was tangled with guilt, with the threads like that of a spider.

It was because of that, that I thought that it was too early to give up on reaching out to this girl.

She has indeed committed sins. However, there was no irreversible damage was done. No one had died, no one had been lost. Instead, if we abandoned her here now, that will cause this strife to end in a tragedy.

I won't let that happen.

"You have only just attained your heart. If I have to say, the incident this time is something like a child's tantrum."

No matter what, to seriously judge a kid's actions and not allow them a second chance is overdoing it.

"To forgive, is the natural action as an elder."

When I said those words, the white girl distorted her neat features.

“...For how many seasons dost Milord think that I have lived. Alas, Milord’s years art lesser than a tenth of mine.”
"In that case, do you at least know how to apologize?"
“I know not. Milord knowest of my hollow existence.”

A thin breath was let out from the mouth of the girl.

"Henceforth, I will need know such needful courtesies."

Saying that, a single, clear teardrop spilled out from her eye.

AUTHOR’S NOTES

After this night, a 3rd monster belonging to my Family, has been added to our party.

◆And thus volume 1 of 'Master of Monsters' is complete.

Following this, we'll move on to volume 2.

◆Thank you very much for reading to this point.

I thought that this work was too deep, in many ways, for 'becoming a light novelist' site, but it's being read more by more people than what I had initially expected, making me feel extremely thankful about it.

<TL note: This work is published on a site for LN authors called 'Let's become a light novelist' -Blesser.>

For those who have favorited and reviewed, I once again give my thanks.

◆Again, receiving so many reviews, makes me really happy.

I generally respond to every comment. I may be slightly late but I'll respond approximately after the next round of updates.

◆The next update one week later, on 2/1 (Saturday).